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THE IMPACT OF THE FRONTIER ON PRAIRIE CANADA:
SELECTED THEMES, 1870-1916

by

PAUL LEONARD VOISEY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

CALGARY, ALBERTA
AUGUST, 1975

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Impact of the Frontier on Prairie Canada; Selected Themes, 1870-1916," submitted by Paul Leonard Voisey, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The "Frontier Thesis" of Frederick Jackson Turner, in spite of several weaknesses, is a neglected but valuable tool for studying Prairie Canada during the settlement period of 1870-1916. The impact of the frontier on Western development was also significant in ways that Turner either neglected entirely or gave little attention.

The preoponderance of single young men, for example, typical of frontier societies, resulted in wide-open drinking, gambling, and prostitution in Western Canada. In turn, these social activities fostered a protest movement led by prairie women. Allied with other movements, and influenced by feminist activities throughout the English speaking world, it sought to legislate morality by winning the vote for women.

The frontier also exerted an impact on prairie urbanization. While the founding, location, growth, size, functions, and number of cities and towns was largely determined by the prairie geography and its economy, and by the self-serving policies of railway companies and prairie urban leaders, it was the frontier that gave rise to the "boom-town" and the competitive, promotional mania that it engendered. The "boom-town," a typical product of all rapidly-settled frontiers, provided urban pioneers with the opportunity to rise from modest means to great wealth, resulting in the formation of a frontier elite entirely nouveau riche in composition and character. The attempt by this elite to import a social and cultural life-style intact from Eastern Canada was thwarted by the frontier conditions that surrounded them and that had contributed to their success.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts to illustrate some of the ways in which the frontier exerted an influence on life in prairie Canada during the settlement period of 1870-1916. For the purposes of the thesis, the following definition of frontier was developed:

A frontier h[illegible] all the following characteristics:

1. It is [illegible]raphic region that is situated on the fringe of existing transpor[illegible] and communication networks, or is in the process of being served by [illegible]

2. Settlement and population growth are striking characteristics and depend more on immigration from the outside than on natural increase.

3. It depends on outside communities for its existence, whether economically, socially, politically, or militarily.

4. Its economy is dominated by natural resource exploitation and related activities.

5. Its population is characterized by a sex imbalance in favour of young males.

(An explanation of this definition is given in Chapter I.)
All these conditions apply regionally to the prairie West between 1870 and 1916.

Throughout the thesis, the terms prairie Canada, prairie West, the West (capitalized), and Western Canada (capitalized) apply to the agricultural regions of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Each chapter deals with this region as a whole, with the exception of

Chapter IV which is a case study. The terms Eastern Canada (capitalized) and the East (capitalized) apply to Ontario and Quebec.

The year 1916 was choosen as the termination date of the thesis over the more commonly used 1914 because much information was taken from 1916 Census reports.

Since the thesis deals with selected themes, each chapter is designed so that it may be read independently of the others. This results in some overlapping between Chapters III and IV.

While the influence of the frontier is an underlying and unifying theme in the thesis, other important factors affecting each chapter subject have not been ignored. Indeed the thesis also attempts to indicate areas where frontier influences were negligible, demonstrating, hopefully, that the "frontier thesis" and the "metropolitan thesis" are not necessarily in opposition.

Chapter I, "The Frontier and Frederick Jackson Turner; Canada and the United States," is speculative and general in nature. It serves as an interpretive frame work and introduction for the remaining chapters. It offers a critique of Turner's main ideas, and attempts to describe a frontier society by drawing broad comparisons between historic frontiers throughout North America, with the accent on Western Canada.

Chapter II, "The Frontier and the 'Votes for Women' Movement," focuses on the impact of the sex imbalance of frontier society on social activities, which, in turn, gave rise to a "democratic frontier political movement." An attempt is made to illustrate the intermingling of frontier influences on the movement with outside influences, and to illustrate the relationship between this movement and other frontier political movements.

Chapter III attempts to illustrate how a rapidly-settled agricultural frontier of the railway age gave rise to a particular pattern of urbanization characterized by boom-towns. It describes how rampant growth affected the psychology of frontier urban leaders, giving rise to intense competition between urban places. It also deals extensively with the relationship between the Western city and its frontier hinterland, and with the impact of outside metropolitan forces--specifically, transcontinental railway policies--on urbanization.

Chapter IV, "The Frontier Businessman: A Case Study of Calgary Entrepreneurs," focuses more specifically on the impact of the frontier on business activity and urban economics. It attempts to analyze upward social mobility on the urban frontier and the nouveau-riche character of its business leaders.

CHAPTER I

THE FRONTIER AND FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER; CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

Frederick Jackson Turner was never popular in Canada. A few writers thought the frontier was paramount in Canadian history[1] but their work was overshadowed by Harold Innis and Donald Creighton. They wrote that great metropolitan centres developed the country. More recently, J. M. S. Careless has dismissed Turner completely: ". . . frontierism has had its use and its day."[2] He too believes that large cities organized frontier expansion. Through centralized control of communication and transportation systems, they cast their political, social, and cultural values far into the expanding hinterland. Many of his ideas are convincing, particularly those that describe cities organizing and controlling the frontier economy.[3]

The frontier thesis has clearly "had its day" yet perhaps modern historians dismiss "its use" too readily. Without denying the significance of the metropolis, I propose to suggest some ways in which the frontier has been important in Canadian history with particular reference to the prairie West. In doing so, it is necessary to define a frontier, to test Turner's ideas against the pioneering experience in Western Canada, to investigate areas he covered only briefly and those he ignored altogether, to compare different kinds of frontiers and differences between the Canadian and American pioneer experiences, and finally, to evaluate the legacy of those experiences.

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[1] These included A. L. Burt, Walter Sage, S. D. Clark, and Arthur Lower.

[2] J. M. S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1954), p. 21.

[3] In particular, Careless, "The Business Community in the Early Development of Victoria, British Columbia," in Canadian Business History; Selected Studies, 1497-1971, ed. by David S. Macmillan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972); "The Development of the Winnipeg Business Community 1870-1890," Royal Society of Canada Transactions, Series 4, Vol. 8 (1970); "Aspects of Metropolitanism in Atlantic Canada," in Regionalism in the Canadian Community, 1867-1967, ed. by Mason Wade (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967); "Aspects of Urban Life in the West, 1870-1914," in Prairie Perspectives 2, ed. by A. W. Rasporich and H. C. Klassen (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Ltd., 1973).

Turner observed that frontiers progressed from simple to complex stages of economic development, usually from nomadic hunting to fur trading, livestock raising, farming, and manufacturing. All these stages existed concurrently throughout American history and rolled westward in successive waves.[4] The wheat-growing region of the United States, for example, continually shifted west throughout the nineteenth century.

Turner's observation warrants deeper investigation for it suggests distinctive economic characteristics shared by all frontiers. Frontiers usually concentrated on the mass production of a very few staples, often a single staple. In an unfamiliar environment, lacking the normal wide range of goods and services, men needing quick investment returns followed the path of least resistance and sought wealth in its easiest form. And because North American frontiers had very small though growing populations, the natural resources seemed so great that virtually everyone could pursue the easiest way to wealth until either the resource or its market disappeared. Hence, the fur trade was able to dominate the economy of Ontario and Quebec for 250 years, until the early nineteenth century when control of the fur-bearing lands was seized by the western-based Hudson's Bay Company. The region then turned to the mass production of wheat and lumber.

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[4] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," The Frontier in American History (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962; first published 1920), pp. 11-12. Paper first read before the American Historical Association, Chicago, July 12, 1893.

The same process was evident in Western Canada. When the white man first arrived, farming was too difficult. New machinery, new techniques, new strains of cereals, and transportation facilities begged developing. It was far easier to wrest a living from the fur-bearing animals. Even during the fur trade successive single staples dominated economic activity. Beaver pelts were almost the sole interest of all traders until the resource was exhausted; buffalo robes were then suddenly prized.

After 1870 the federal government struggled to initiate farming in the North-West Territories but low rainfall and grain prices combined with inadequate farming techniques to frustrate the venture. Frontiersmen turned to cattle ranching, the easiest feasible alternative. It required less capital per acre, less technical skill, and less effort--the product could even walk part way to market. Only a phenomenal combination of economic circumstances around 1900 made farming worth the effort.[5] Again, pioneers concentrated on a single staple: wheat. It grew best on the prairies, better than any other cereal and required the least work and expertise. Almost everyone grew wheat. Its production was pursued with such single-mindedness that many farmers never bothered to raise other crops or even livestock until lower prices forced diversification in the 1920's.

---

[5] Fast-rising grain prices, sudden increases in annual prairie rainfall, monetary expansion and low interest rates due to spectacular gold strikes, the settlement of remaining U.S. homesteads, and decreases in ocean shipping rates.

Intense concentration on single staples shackled frontier societies with grave problems. The frontier needed outside markets for its product; it was keenly sensitive to fluctuating prices and depressions. Manufacturing was generally limited to the simple processing of the product. Most capital and consumer goods could not be manufactured on the frontier because the local market was too small to be profitable and heavy markets were too distant to justify transportation costs. The only other major activities were commercial, buying needed manufactured goods from the east and selling in the west, or transportation. Both relied on successful production of the great staple. Frontiers then, far from being self-sufficient, were heavily dependent on the east--for manufactured goods, for transportation systems, for capital; so dependent that metropolitan centres were able to exert great control over them, often to the disadvantage of the frontier itself.

Once secondary manufacturing accounted for the greatest part of economic growth, a region was no longer a frontier. This final stage of development was not easily achieved. Most often, it resulted when a new frontier allowed the old to become an intermediate service centre between east and west. Wholesale businesses greatly expanded and the growing local market, together with the new frontier, stimulated manufacturing activity. Turner frequently used the American mid-west as a classic example of how stages in economic development progressed. A frontier devoted to the production of wheat before the Civil War, its local economy grew diversified with the appearance of new frontier markets in states further west. Similarly, the opening of a northern petroluem frontier after 1945 gave Alberta a degree of economic diversification that Saskatchewan and Manitoba never achieved. Yet reliance on a few raw staples did not doom any region to perpetual frontier conditions for frontier societies also shared many non-economic qualities.

Much confusion in this respect has arisen over the role of the frontier and the physical environment in shaping society. Was there any difference between the two? Turner never explored the problem but clearly they were not always identical. In Western Canada, for example, the environment remains unchanged and still influences the way of life, yet the region can no longer be called a frontier. The physical setting was part of the frontier experience only when that environment posed new problems never before encountered by the settlers. The fact that much of the praire West received less than 15 inches of precipitation a year did not in itself constitute part of the pioneering process, but the fact that the settlers were unfamiliar with arid conditions did.

Many peculiarities were shared by frontier societies whose environments and time in history differed radically. Such qualities were determined more by the tendency of the frontier to attract a particular type of individual and by the ways in which the frontier experience changed him. Turner was convinced that pioneering instilled Westerners with distinctive traits and ideals. Important among them was the spirit of innovation:

> . . . there was the ideal of discovery, the courageous determination to break new paths, indifference to the dogma that because an institution or a condition exists, it must remain. All American experience has gone to the making of the spirit of innovation; it is in the blood and will not be repressed.[6]

This argument raises a question central to the frontier thesis: did frontiersmen create a bold new life or did they cling to the old ways and slavishly copy the east? Although many historians have assumed that people fled to the wilderness to initiate social change, the argument that they were trying to avoid change has more validity, particularly in the case of pioneer farmers. Nearly all were from rural areas in the east or Europe. When land became scarce and expensive, they could have drifted into the industrializing cities along with thousands of other rural migrants. They choose instead to head west, to avoid the unwelcome transition to urban life.

This desire to escape change was often strongest among close-knit religious sects. Such groups played a prominent role in settling the frontiers of North America. Often they were escaping increasing religious persecution. Such motives drove the Quakers from England to Pennsylvania, the Mormons from New York to Illinois and finally Utah, and the Anabaptists from Russia to Western Canada. Frequently they fled from more subtle changes. Religions that imposed a strong sense of community and a rigid way of life on their members sometimes disintegrated in urban centres where the individual was constantly bombarded with alien ideas and ways that challenged his faith. Rural areas sheltered the sect from this danger but the problem arose again when the area was invaded by "gentiles" or when the land could no longer absorb the growing population of the sect. Such groups continually migrated to new frontiers where isolation shielded the individual from the sins of the outside world.

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[6] Turner, "The West and American Ideals," The Frontier in American History, p. 306.

Frontiersmen, then, were often social conservatives. As George Stanley notes, the pioneering experience did not seem to change them:

> No individual is able to cut himself off from his past experience for it is part of himself; and so the pioneer, when transplanted from the Old World to the New, or from east to west, invariably endeavours to reproduce that which he already knows, to build according to a familiar plan. It is one of the myths of our western history which pictures our early pioneers joyfully "throwing off the bedraggled garments of Europe and starting life afresh in the wilderness." Far from discarding the bedraggled garments of Europe, they continued to cling to them, even when they were manifestly unsuitable for the bitter climate. In other words the pioneer is usually imitative rather than creative.[7]

Much evidence supports these statements. Historians tend to skim over the history of frontier settlements that failed and have concentrated on those that succeeded, yet the failure rate was far higher than is generally believed. Europe's early attempts at North American settlement resulted in thousands of failures, tragedies repeated throughout the entire westward movement. Even in Western Canada, the last great arable frontier of the continent and the one in which man was most aided by modern technology, the failure rate was staggering. Between 1870 and 1930 Chester Martin conservatively estimates that 40% of all initial homestead entries were cancelled,[8] largely because homesteaders were unable or unwilling to adapt to the new environment.

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[7] George F. G. Stanley, "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis," Canadian Historical Association Reports (1940), p. 106.

[8] Chester Martin, "Dominion Lands" Policy (Toronto: Macmillan, 1938), p. 524.

Although the settlement of North America ultimately depended on pioneers accepting necessary innovations, they were seldom developed by the pioneers themselves. It was the host culture or the eastern metropolis that often took the initiative, and the frontiersman usually accepted innovations only when his survival was threatened. When 16th and 17th century Frenchmen faced starvation, it was the Indians who gave them strange foods, medicines to combat scurvy, shelter against the bitter winter, and canoes to traverse the shallow streams. The fur trade was a combination of business techniques imported from Europe and the hunting and transportation techniques of the natives. On the prairie, even open range ranching owed much to the Indian buffalo hunt. The spring and fall round-ups corresponded to the spring and fall hunts, the trail boss took the role of chief and commanded a similar number of warriors and the horse was crucial to both activities.

When the host culture could not provide the frontiersman with needed innovations, he looked to the metropolis for help. Prairie farming demanded a new technology that would permit one man to cultivate a great acreage, essential for success in the arid low-yielding west. The polished steel plough, mechanical seed drill with metal discs, the McCormick reaper, barbed wire, engine-driven thresher and other improvements were usually developed in great cities like Chicago. W. Saunders first bred quick-growing prairie wheat in Ottawa. In Canada even those innovations of Western origin were often the product of professional scientists employed at federal government experimental farms. And when the pioneer society did contribute an innovation of significance, it did so only when forced by extreme circumstances. The Noble Blade, invented by a farmer at Nobleford, Alberta, and now considered essential to fight wind erosion, was not invented until the "black blizzards" of the great depression robbed the prairie of its topsoil.

Whenever the pioneer could, he rebuilt his old life. Examples abound, but the case of Daniel McNiven who pioneered in treeless southern Alberta in 1905 well illustrates the point. Dan's house was a quarter-mile from the road. Labouriously, he planted trees along the lane, hauled water to them, replaced dying ones. They had little chance to survive the arid open prairie and they afforded no shelter to the farm buildings. Why did he plant them? There is no logical explanation except that he was trying to re-create the physical environment of his native Ontario.

Even when forced to be innovative, the settler would often abandon his new-found independence at the earliest opportunity. The lack of trees and transportation facilities on the early prairie frontier gave rise to the sod house. Yet once the railroad arrived, pioneers refused to refine an architectual style suited to their needs. They imported one. Imitations of H. H. Richardson's Marshall Field building in Chicago proliferated in Western Canadian towns and cities like mushrooms. In these frontier urban communities much energy was exhausted imitating the east. The promotional literature of their boards of trade overflowed with favourable comparisons to eastern social and cultural life.

Though the lack of innovative spirit was rooted in the conservative nature of the pioneer, it was reinforced by the absence of great cities. Complexity, variety, and turbulent change best stimulates new ideas and this environment is constantly present only in large cities. The frontier did not have them. Life was different on the frontier, sometimes radically so, not because the pioneer wished it but because necessity dictated it. Many unique characteristics of frontier life sprang out of conditions beyond the control of either pioneer or metropolitan society. A frontier can be described as a region where population growth owed more to immigration than natural increase. But this influx was seldom balanced. It was always easiest for single young men, without families or strong roots in the community, to head for the western frontier. Their preponderance shaped the character of frontier social activities. Although the behaviour of these male groups sometimes differed, depending on the cultural milieu of the donor society, it usually involved heavy drinking, gambling, prostitution, and brawling. Such activity was typical of both seventeenth century New France and the Canadian West after 1900. Often it sparked violent controversies with frontier religious sects ending in the strict suppression of hedonistic activities.

The frontier often meant isolation. At best, the nearest neighbour might be miles away. Daily life could be dangerous. A broken ankle or minor illness could result in death simply because no one was at hand to help. Prolonged loneliness was often a condition of life. Bachelor pioneers sometimes abandoned the homestead in winter to live with a neighbour, if only for companionship. At one time "western hospitality" was no myth. Frontier families trapped wayward travellers and entertained them for days. Isolation meant that daily problems had to be overcome without help. This type of imposed individualism was probably responsible for the notion that the pioneer was an eager innovator completely divorced from the ways of his former society.

But the best known trait that Turner ascribed to the frontiersman was his love of democracy:

> American democracy was born of no theorists' dream; it was not carried in the Sarah Constant to Virginia, nor in the Mayflower to Plymouth. It came out of the American forest, and it gained new strength each time it touched a new frontier.[9]

It is crucial to know Turner's definition of democracy; clearly he accepted de Tocqueville's premise that it meant equality: "Where everybody could have a farm, almost for taking it, economic equality easily resulted, and this involved political equality."[10] Free land was the key to Turner's frontier democracy; it was the safety valve that freed discontented masses from a losing clash with wealthy capitalists.

To what extent did the frontier promote equality? Initially, it attracted people more homogeneous than society at large simply because the very rich felt no compulsion to pioneer and the very poor could not afford it.[11] Furthermore, the frontier primarily attracted rural and small town immigrants, particularly farmers. Because land was so plentiful, squatters grabbed as much as they were capable of farming and the homestead system gave each pioneer an equal holding. True, governments sometimes granted lands on a discriminatory basis; they often turned over huge tracts to speculators and railway companies, yet when compared with Europe, few areas in rural America developed a rigid class structure. The French government tried to introduce economic feudalism into New France in 1663 but failed. The intended peasants had an option open to no European: they could and did flee to the frontier to live with the Indians and trade in furs. Because of this option, the habitant who remained received concessions unknown in France. A rigid class structure appeared in rural America only under forced slavery in the confederate South and then with considerable difficulty and at great expense. In general, however, the history of North American agriculture has involved a large population of small land owners.

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[9] Turner, "The West and American Ideals," The Frontier in American History, p. 293.

[10] Turner, "The Problem of the West," The Frontier in American History, p. 212.

[11] Hence, the frontier was seldom the viable option for downtrodden masses that Turner described, except that it prevented many landowning eastern farmers from losing their class status and becoming propertyless labourers in the eastern metropolis.

Frontier cities and towns also offered a degree of equality lacking in the urban east or in Europe. The frontier was responsible for a unique process of urbanization. Cities and towns, however small, were immediately vital to the frontier; they were transportation points where staples were shipped east and where incoming manufactured goods were dispensed to the pioneers. Hence, the "instant city" arose, particularly in the post-railway era when the settlement of frontiers was greatly accelerated. Most spectacular were the gold rush towns; the population of Dawson City, Yukon, sprang to about 15,000 in the summer of 1898. A year earlier Dawson did not exist. In Western Canada where hundreds of thousands of rural pioneers descended like locusts after 1900, urban growth was explosive. Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Regina, with a combined population of 12,000 in 1901, boasted 157,500 residents by 1916. Slightly older cities on the periphery of new frontiers grew similarly.

Between 1880 and 1890 Kansas City boomed from 56,000 to 133, 000; St. Paul, Minneapolis, from 88,000 to 298,000; Winnipeg from 45,000 in 1901 to 187,000 in 1916. The instant city phenomenon, possible only on or near rapidly settling frontiers, provided one of the greatest environments for social mobility in the history of man. Instant growth meant that anyone with a little capital had an unprecedented opportunity to get ahead. Real estate could be had for a pittance and sold ten years later for a fortune; infant retail and wholesale businesses could expand and prosper with amazing quickness. Although social divisions quickly appeared in the new cities, the elite was solidly nouveau-riche; many rose from the humblest social origins. Generally, the frontier provided a significant degree of equality of ownership in the rural areas and equality of opportunity in the urban ones.

This equality was expressed politically. The tendency of governments in North America has been to protect and promote the interests of the most economically powerful segment of society. Increasingly after the Civil War, those interests represented great transportation and manufacturing corporations at the national level in both Canada and the United States. Yet at state and provincial levels it was not necessarily true, particularly on the frontier. Agriculture was the most powerful economic interest and governments guarded its welfare and promoted its aspirations. Unlike manufacturing and transportation, however, control of this dominant "industry" rested with a majority of the electorate: the pioneer farmers. A frontier government might be corruptible, it might yield to pressure from a railway company or a wealthy city businessman, but if it hoped to stay in power, it dared not offend the farmers.

It is important to note that this democracy of the majority applied only on the arable frontiers of North America. In the western mountains and deserts, in the glacier-scarred Canadian Shield, the situation was very different. Here the prize was not agricultural produce but timber or minerals. Their exploitation permitted great corporations to grow and monopolize the wealth. The extensive use of unskilled labour, the absence of a middle class, the crude work camps, and dangerous working conditions combined to create enormous social divisions. Here occurred many of the most violent confrontations between labour and capital in North American history. It was on the lumber and mining frontiers that the most class conscious of workers, the Marxist, often appeared. The governments of these regions, like governments elsewhere, catered to the interests of those controlling the most powerful economic enterprises. On the non-arable frontier that group was very small: the mine owners and the timber barons.

This situation was avoided on the agricultural frontier. Farming was not controlled by great corporations. They occasionally tried, but without success. In 1882 Major W. R. Bell secured 49,000 acres of government and railway lands at Indian Head, Saskatchewan. He built 100 farm buildings and invested $250,000 in the first two years.[12] He had trouble with squatters. Early frost killed the 1884 crop. Rainfall was insufficient. Labourers quit and took up homesteads. Wheat prices were painfully low. Fire levelled much of the farm in 1893. Bell went bankrupt. Capitalists learned that farming was mighty risky—too risky. Better to let the small man take the chances and make money selling him equipment and storing, shipping and exporting his products. Timber and mines were risky too, but the payoff could be immensely greater and capitalists were willing to take the chance. Consequently, the egalitarian economic and political life of the frontier was confined to arable regions.

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[12] Douglas Hill, The Opening of the Canadian West (Toronto: Longman, 1967, Windjammer edition, 1973), p. 176.

Turner never assessed frontier democracy in quite this manner. He saw expressions of it in the tendency of frontiers to revolt against the east. From Bacon's rebellion in seventeenth-century backwoods Virginia to the prairie Populist revolt of the late nineteenth century, Turner noted the consistency with which protest movements sprang from the frontier.[13] The equality created by free land, he felt, instilled westerners with a hatred for the small privileged elite of the east.[14] He explained the conflict more logically, however, in terms of the differing interests that unequal stages of economic development engendered. The frontier, heavily dependent and handicapped by its reliance on staple production, resented the economic control wielded by the populous east.

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[13] Turner, "Contributions of the West to American Democracy," The Frontier in American History, pp. 247-58.

[14] Turner also thought that frontier democracy was strengthened by the independent spirit of the pioneer which was expressed in terms of liberty unshackled by the restraints of government. This idea sprang from Turner's notions about the innovative spirit of the pioneer. Hence, he was forced to argue that pioneers resented government intervention until the settlement of plains when, faced with increasing dependence on banks, railways, and other large corporations, they suddenly wanted government intervention to preserve democracy. Turner, "Pioneer Ideals and the State University," The Frontier in American History, pp. 276-7.

Though the pioneer might have a strong voice in state or provincial government, the policies that often affected him most were national in origin. Turner neglected other factors that contributed to the rebellious nature of the frontier. Pioneers expected their new life to be materially better than the one they had left. The promotional literature used to lure pioneers to Western Canada, for example, convinced many that easy wealth was theirs for the taking. When their aspirations did not materialize, they rebelled. The frustration of adjusting to a strange virgin environment could also be transformed into political discontent, as it was for the prairie pioneer, who, upon seeing his crop destroyed by grasshoppers, cried out: "goddamn the Canadian Pacific Railway."

Frontier protest movements, like all political minorities, cloaked their self-interests in egalitarian and democratic language. Opposed to the National Policy of government subsidized railways and high tariffs designed to benefit the East, Western Canadian pioneers launched an attack on the "non-democratic" government system that favoured big corporations. Control over Members of Parliament, they argued, must not rest with corruptable political parties, but with local constituencies. They advocated the power of recall and direct democracy through the initiative and the referendum. Frontier political movements like the Direct Legislation League, the Non-Partisan League, the United Farmers of Alberta, and the Progressive Party rallied to these and other "grass-roots" democratic principles.

Turner felt that frontier protest, expressed as a plea for democracy, revitalized political life at the national level. He noted, for example, that the presidents who contributed most to democratic equality in America were from frontier societies: Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and Abraham Lincoln. The announcement of this thesis in 1893 launched a controversy among American historians still unresolved and likely to remain so. It can be said, however, that frontier democracy wielded greater influence in the United States than in Canada simply because America's frontiers were largely arable. Except for the prairies, the fertile patch in the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes lowlands, and a few scattered areas in the Maritimes, Canada's frontiers were non-agricultural. Because of the vast rocky Shield, the American mid-west became the farming frontier for Canadians between 1850 and 1900. As a result, Canadian farm pioneers usually constituted such a small proportion of the national population that they were seldom able to exert great political influence. Western Canadian protest movements established a dismal record in this respect. At the height of its power, the Progressive Party was still too weak to even force the older eastern parties to modify their policies, a weakness well exemplified by the willingness of the Liberals and Conservatives to vote as one in order to crush Progressive economic proposals.

In many other respects, the frontier was never as significant in Canada as in the United States. Its settlement never became a national race for political dominance between free-holding and slave-holding regions. After 1783 the control of the frontier by European powers was considered a vital threat to the security of the new republic, and for over 100 years national policy was devoted to bringing the frontiers of North America into the Union. The smaller settlements in Canada were never strong enough to execute or even entertain such lofty ambitions.

Nor were they economically powerful enough to believe they could tap the trade of the Orient by driving west and securing uninterrupted passage to the great ports of the Pacific coast.

Militarily, the frontier posed national problems for the United States that were largely absent in Canada. Because Americans were pushing into arable frontiers, Indian wars flared continually. In Canada, there was little fertile land to conquer. Pioneers became fur traders rather than farmers and were thus able to cooperate economically with the Indians. And when the French did attempt to farm the narrow St. Lawrence valley, they found it uninhabited by natives. By the time farming pioneers reached southern Ontario, the Indians had already been devastated by smallpox and the War of 1812 and were peacefully situated on reserves. By the time Canadian farmers invaded the Western prairies, the disappearance of the buffalo had seriously weakened the once powerful hunting tribes. The North-West Rebellion was crushed quickly and easily. In the United States, however, the arable frontier rolled west to the Rockies uninterrupted. Pioneer farmers attempted to conquer and cultivate Indian territory at a time when the natives were still strong enough to offer powerful resistance.

Yet the frontier was not wholly without significance in Canada. As in the United States, it provided new resources and markets that allowed the eastern economy to diversify and boom. It was responsible for Canada's most important economic blueprint: the National Policy. The creation of a powerful manufacturing community nurtured by high tariffs and east-west rail traffic depended exclusively on establishing a great market by settling the Western frontier. As Turner pointed out, the frontier experience gave birth to the idea that economic development largely meant massive resource exploitation.[15] The pioneers who tackled a seemingly inexhaustable supply of fertile land and rich resources soon learned to conduct their enterprises in an extensive wasteful manner rather than an intensive conservation-minded one. Farmers and entrepreneurs both learned to think in terms of quantity rather than of quality production. But perhaps it is too preposterous to suggest that the North American flair for assembly-line mass production is a frontier legacy.

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[15] Turner, "Pioneer Ideals and the State University," The Frontier in American History.

CHAPTER II

THE FRONTIER AND THE "VOTES FOR WOMEN" MOVEMENT

Early in 1916 the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta granted the franchise to women. The event was part of a political movement world wide in scope. At the outbreak of the Great War only New Zealand, Australia, Finland, Norway, and Iceland had votes for women; but by 1920 the list also included Denmark, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Britain, Canada, and the United States. After World War Two, the movement swept the Catholic states of Europe and passed on to Asia. Considering the scope of woman suffrage, it is difficult to interpret its rise in Western Canada as a protest movement fostered entirely by local circumstance. Prior to 1920, the West, and Canada as a whole, had something in common with 15 other nations that provided fertile ground for the movement.

They were countries experiencing burgeoning industrialization and urbanization--Protestant countries where a belief in political democracy was strongly expressed. Between 1874 and 1912, 14 European nations extensively widened the franchise for men.[1] By extending the vote once in the name of democracy, it became easier to do so again and again until carried to its final conclusion: universal suffrage. Those nations that did so quickest were also places where women were moving into the urban economy--as labourers, store clerks, and teachers--where they demanded the political rights of men. Their move from the home was hastened by technological and commercial developments that made housekeeping less time-consuming, by the typical smaller families of industrializing Protestant nations, and by the Great War which forced them into factories in unprecedented numbers. Significantly, ten nations gave women the vote between 1915 and 1920.

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[1] R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World (3rd ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 289.

These factors were important in shaping the movement on the Canadian prairies, but both the origins of the movement, and its major thrust, were firmly rooted in conditions largely peculiar to frontier societies. In the United States the frontier led the nation in votes for women. Raw, untamed Wyoming, with a white population of only 10,000, introduced limited women's franchise in 1869 and full suffrage in 1890.[2] Of the 15 states with full woman suffrage at the time of the 19th Amendment in 1920, 13 lay west of the Mississippi; of those, 11 had granted the vote before 1914.[3] In Canada the situation was similar. Women in the four Western provinces received the franchise in 1916, followed by Ontario in 1917, Nova Scotia and the federal government in 1918, New Brunswick in 1919, Prince Edward Island in 1922, and Quebec in 1940. In spite of the fact that five Eastern governments granted the franchise within only six years of the West, woman suffrage enjoyed the most popularity and experienced the least resistance on the frontier. The first woman elected to a British legislature came, not from the metropolitan centre of Toronto or London, England, but from the small prairie town of Claresholm, Alberta.[4] If the Canadian West had been settled simultaneously with the American, women would probably have had the vote 20 or 30 years before their Eastern sisters, as they did in the United States. As it was, the Canadian plains were not settled until woman suffrage was also ripe for fulfillment in Eastern North America. This propensity for the Western half of the continent to lead the Eastern sprang from the desire of women, and many men, to rid the frontier of much of its social life: hard drinking, prostitution, and gambling. From this platform of moral reform, the votes for women movement soon embraced a variety of causes designed to civilize, humanize, and Anglicize the Canadian West.

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[2] Alan P. Grimes, The Puritan Ethic and Woman Suffrage (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967). Grimes analyzes the movement in Wyoming and Utah.

[3] Arthur S. Link, American Epoch; A History of the United States since the 1890's, Vol. I 1897-1920 (3rd ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 234.

A frontier is more than a region in the process of settlement; it is a place where sex and age ratios do not balance. Between 1881 and 1916 the population of the prairie provinces soared from 119,000 to 1,700,000[5] and the most conspicuous settlers were single young men. Unhampered by families or deep roots in the community, it was easiest for them to head West, and married pioneers often came alone hoping to establish themselves before sending for the family. Between 1891 and 1911 there were never less than 118 men per 100 women in the three prairie provinces, and in 1911 Saskatchewan recorded a high of 148 per

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[4] W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 48. Mrs. C. McKinney was elected as a Non-Partisan League candidate to the Alberta legislature in 1917.

[5] Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 1, Tables 1a and 1b.

100.[6] Imbalance was particularly striking in the booming new cities: in 1911 Saskatoon had 151 men per 100 women; Calgary, 155; and Regina, 189.[7] By contrast, Ontario never had more than 106 men per 100 women in the entire period from 1871 to 1921.[8] And, excepting a few adventuresome school teachers, most west-bound females were already married. The West also had younger men. In 1911 the percentage of men between the ages of 20 and 34 was 32% in Manitoba, 48% in Saskatchewan, 37% in Alberta, but only 27% in Ontario.[9]

Historian James Gray has recently shown that a preponderance of young unattached males resulted in wide-open drinking, prostitution, and gambling.[10] These activities were social substitutes for family life and provided recreational escape from the overcrowded boarding houses of instantly-built cities. Hotels and saloons, backroom gambling establishments, poolhalls and brothels sprawled before the largest urban train stations. In 1910, Reverend J. S. Woodsworth counted 60 bars, 50 brothels, 51 poolhalls, and innumerable liquor retailers in down-town Winnipeg.[11] The scene was similar in Regina's "Germantown," on River

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[6] Ibid., Table 7a.

[7] Ibid., Vol. 2, Table 19.

[8] Ibid., Vol. 1, Table 7a.

[9] Ibid., Table 10.

[10] See James H. Gray, The Boy From Winnipeg (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970); Red Lights on the Prairies (Toronto: Macmillan, 1971); and Booze, The Impact of Whiskey on the Prairie West (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972).

[11] J. S. Woodsworth, My Neighbor (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1911), map.

Street in Moose Jaw, on Kinistino Street and its tributaries in Edmonton, in Saskatoon where brothels specialized in Negroes and Orientals, and north of the Bow River in Calgary where Diamond Dolly's and the Langevin and Nose Creek fleshpots complemented the hotels, bars, and gambling-rooms of 9th Avenue South. Although these social institutions made their appearance in the small towns--a rural community in a Frederick Grove novel had its local prostitute[12]--they were concentrated in the larger centres where the sex ratio was most unbalanced and the market concentrated.

The West was more sinful than the East, or so thought the Reverend J. G. Shearer of Toronto who emphatically stated that "Winnipeg has the rottenest condition of social vice in Canada."[13] According to Gray, the average Manitoban drank three times as much as the average Quebecer and was convicted for drunkeness twice as often as the average Ontarioan.[14] He notes that "Drinking was for the purpose of getting drunk, almost never for relaxing conversation,"[15] and Professor W. L. Morton agrees: "They were western bars in which men drank, and were encouraged to drink, to intoxication, not places of social relaxation."[16]

Furthermore, sin was tolerated in Western Canada because a large sector of the population wanted it and because governments seemed powerless to stop it anyway. An early Manitoba act gave both the province and its cities the right to licence hotels and grocery stores for the sale of alcohol. Although numerous regulations accompanied the act, the courts ruled most of them invalid in 1883. The province could licence, but not regulate, the sale of booze.[17] In the North-West Territories the federal government imposed prohibition in 1873 to keep Yankee whisky traders out and the Indians sober. But whites could drink. The Lieutenant-Governor was empowered to issue liquor permits at his discretion, and in 1875 the manufacture of alcohol was allowed by special permission. Although permits were issued freely, the outcry against controls was so strong that the Territorial Legislature won the right to licence the sale of beer in 1888 and the sale of all liquor in 1891.[18] By 1900 the saloons were as wide-open as those in Manitoba.

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[12] Frederick P. Grove, Settlers of the Marsh (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1925).

[13] Gray, Red Lights, p. 52.

[14] Gray, The Boy, p. 10.

[15] Gray, Booze, p. 14.

[16] W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (2nd ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 321.

Prostitutes were also tolerated. In 1883 a red light district popped up on Winnipeg's western outskirts, and it was ignored by the police until a reform crusade led by Reverend Frederick DuVal resulted in a crushing police raid in 1904. The prostitutes simply began street walking, however, and reformers were more enraged than ever. In 1909 Chief McRae decided that if he could not stop prostitution, he would control it. With the cooperation of madame Minnie Woods and a real estate agent, a segregated zone was established on McFarlane and

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[17] Gary, Booze, p. 10

[18] D. M. McLeod, "Liquor Control in the North-West Territories: The Permit System, 1870-91," Saskatchewan History, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn, 1963).

Annabella Streets and within the year 50 brothels appeared.[19] Many cities experimented with segregated sex; others located brothels outside the municipal limits where they were tolerated, and frequented, by the North-West Mounted Police. As for gambling, authorities were powerless to curb the card sharps, pool hustlers, shell-game men, and crap shooters that stalked the streets and bars of the cities and towns. There is little evidence to suggest that they tried.

Not everyone, however, was happy with the state of Western social life, particularly married women, who were often its prime victims. For the man just off work, the bar was the only place open that would cash his paycheck. Grocery money found its way into saloon tills. Some wives were beaten by drunken husbands; others worried about the temptation of the brothels. Women soon became faithful crusaders for moral reform and they pressured municipal governments for action:

> We the Mothers' Association of Winnipeg, believing that the so-called social evil is the deadliest enemy of our boys and girls, as well as a sin against God and man, are most emphatically opposed to the idea of segregation as being contrary to law and giving opportunity for a dual system of vice. We would therefore urge on the city council and police commissioners a most aggressive campaign against the proprieters and frequenters, as well as the inmates, of houses of ill-repute.[20]

In Edmonton, Mrs. E. E. Marshall, a clergyman's wife, carried the Young Women's Christian Association banner against prostitution along with the Temperance and Moral Reform Society. In Winnipeg, the latter organization, stocked primarily by female membership, joined the

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[19] Gray, Red Lights, pp. 44-5 and 54-5.

[20] Letter to the Editor, Winnipeg Free Press, July 7, 1908, p. 12.

Salvation Army for the same cause. The war in Calgary saw the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Local Council of Women, and the Calgary Citizens' Committee serving front-line duty. Occasionally, women took direct action. When the settlers of Big Valley, Alberta, refused to run the local prostitutes out of town, vigilant women burned the brothel down.[21]

But the brunt of reform energy was directed against liquor. Its use was widespread, its effects were felt directly and it was linked to other sins. The saloon was infested with gamblers and pimps, and men liquored up before visiting the brothels. The Manitoba Temperance Alliance was formed in 1883 along with the Total Abstinence League and the Anti-Treating League, which campaigned against buying drinks for friends. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) entered the province in 1893, and after 1900 the Royal Templars of Temperance and the Loyal Temperance Union emerged. In 1907 the Manitoba Social and Moral Reform Council was formed to unify the movement. These organizations did not invade Alberta and Saskatchewan until after 1900 when both population and saloons soared in number, but by 1907 the W.C.T.U. and provincial Moral and Social Reform Councils were particularly active. The prohibitionists staged public meetings to denounce sin, pledged new members to abstention, and sang songs like "Lips that Touch Liquor Will Never Touch Mine."

When these techniques failed to win converts, the prohibitionists increased their pressure on governments to legislate morality. They met resistance or indifference. Petitions to the Manitoba government resulted in a plebiscite in 1894, but although prohibition won, Premier Greenway said Ottawa would have to sanction the measure. The Dominion held its own plebiscite in 1898 and the "drys" captured every province except Quebec. Prime Minister Laurier, however, claimed that the voter turn out was far too small to warrant prohibition legislation.[22] Hugh Macdonald, the son of hard-drinking Sir John A., promised to bring prohibition to Manitoba in 1900, but he soon left the Premier's chair for federal politics. His successor, Rodmond Roblin, decided another plebiscite was needed and in 1902 the drys were defeated. From then until the collapse of his Conservative government in 1915, Roblin turned a deaf ear to prohibition. Under the federal Canada Temperance Act of 1878, however, municipalities could decide the matter locally and after 1900 many Anglo-Saxon communities in south-western Manitoba voted dry, but not Winnipeg or the European settlements.

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[21] Mrs. G. Fowler, The Big Valley Story (Big Valley, Alta.: by the author, 1964), p. 43.

In Alberta and Saskatchewan, where settlement lagged behind Manitoba, prohibitionists did not petition governments seriously until after 1907. Premier Walter Scott received temperance protests coolly, doubted the strength of the movement, and refused to take action until his dramatic turn-about in 1915. The reaction of the Alberta government was identical and prohibitionists in the two new provinces experienced difficulty in local option drives. Between 1909 and 1914 the Saskatchewan courts disallowed many of the liquor restrictions established by municipalities.[23] Women were also losing the battle of the brothels. Although besieged by legions of women and clergymen in 1905, Brandon City Council stubbornly refused to smash the red light district,[24] and aldermen all over the West reacted similarly. But regardless of whether municipal authorities favoured segregation as a necessary evil or not, prostitution continued unabated.

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[22] Gray, Booze, p. 59.

As a result of these failures, women gradually realized that the power of the vote would be necessary to clean up the West. If men felt unwilling or unable to legislate and enforce morality, women did not, and in 1893 the W.C.T.U. petitioned the Manitoba government for woman suffrage.[25] On the heels of this request came the formation of the Manitoba Equal Franchise Club and the Icelandic Woman Suffrage League, but for many years, these organizations had little impact. Women property owners already had the vote in some municipalities, but when a local option vote on prohibition was held at Carman, Manitoba, in

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[23] Ruth E. Spence, Prohibition in Canada (Toronto: Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance, 1919), pp. 428-37.

[24] Gray, Red Lights, pp. 68-70.

[25] Although the first organization to do so in the West, it was not the first in Canada. Suffragist Emily Stowe founded the Toronto Women's Literary Club in 1877 and it soon advocated votes for women. See Joanne Emily Thompson, "The Influence of Dr. Emily Howard Stowe on the Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada," Ontario History, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Dec., 1962), p. 256. The Toronto Women's Suffrage Club was founded in 1883 and five years later the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement League was organized, also in Ontario. The name was soon changed to the Canadian Suffrage Association. A similar development took place in the United States where the woman suffrage movement originated in metropolitan centres of the East, but found more popularity and quicker implementation in the frontier West.

1907, their names were left off the voting list by authority of a Manitoba Order-in-Council.[26] The incident fired the movement and new organizations were formed. The Woman's Labour League of Manitoba endorsed suffrage in 1910 and the following year the Political Equality League was founded in Winnipeg[27] with the blessing of the W.C.T.U.

In Saskatchewan local units of the popular Homemakers Club began advocating suffrage about 1910, and scattered Political Equality Leagues foreshadowed a provincial organization in 1914. The following year suffrage advocates formed the Provincial Equal Franchise Board of Saskatchewan. In Alberta the W.C.T.U. and the Calgary Local Council of Women spearheaded the suffrage campaign, and in 1913 the Equal Franchise League of Edmonton was founded. All across the prairies, these organizations received instant support from the women's auxiliaries of farm organizations, temperance groups, church clubs, the Y.W.C.A., the Canadian Women's Press Club, the Women's Institutes, and the National and Local Councils of Women.[28]

Moral Reform was clearly the prime objective of the suffragists. They all endorsed temperance and their leadership was dominated by prohibitionists: Nellie McClung, well known novelist and lecturer; E. Cora Hind, agricultural editor of the Winnipeg Free Press; Francis Beynon of the

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[26] Nellie McClung, The Stream Runs Fast; My Own Story (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1945), p. 63.

[27] The name was changed to the Manitoba Suffrage League in 1913.

[28] The National Council of Women was founded in 1893 as an educational and social work organization, but was not a suffrage advocate. After 1900, however, many of its Local Councils, particularly in the West, began demanding the franchise, and in 1904 the National body formed a Standing Committee on Suffrage and Rights of Citizenship. In 1910 the National Council officially endorsed votes for women.

Grain Growers' Guide; Mary Crawford, C. L. Clendennen, Louise McKinney, and many others. In her book, In Times Like These, a defense of the feminist movement published in 1915, Nellie McClung frequently mentioned the evils of liquor and its elimination through Woman suffrage.[29] A housewife's letter to the Grain Growers' Guide, which read in part "I think where the temperance question is concerned that women surely should be allowed to vote,"[30] was typical of thousands others that appeared on editors' desks throughout the West. Temperance was closely associated with woman suffrage in other parts of the country as well. In the late 1870's the Canadian Citizen, a prohibitionist Toronto weekly, became the first newspaper to endorse votes for women.[31] Liquor was attacked increasingly as new medical studies uncovered its physical effects, and social studies revealed its economic and social impact. And booze consumption was high. J. K. Chapman, in his study on temperance in New Brunswick and Maine, suggests that "We cannot begin to comprehend the nature of the force behind the so-called temperance movement . . . unless we appreciate just how much our ancestors drank, and how frequently."[32] Gray argues that strong drink had its greatest impact in male-dominated Western Canada, and the existence of segregated brothels added further zeal to the prohibition movement.

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[29] Nellie McClung, In Times Like These (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972). First published by D. Appleton and Co., 1915. See in particular pp. 34, 50, 74.

[30] Grain Growers' Guide, Mar. 26, 1913, p. 9.

[31] Thompson, "Emily Stowe," p. 256.

[32] J. K. Chapman, "The Mid-19th Century Temperance Movements in New Brunswick and Maine," Canadian History Before Confederation, ed. by J. M. Bumsted (Georgetown, Ont.: Irwin-Dorsey, 1972), p. 444.

At first the vote was a tactic employed to realize this objective, but it soon became a goal in itself. Women were moving into the work force, even in the predominantly rural West. Between 1901 and 1911 the percentage of women over 10 years of age who were wage earners increased in Manitoba from 10% to 15% and in Alberta and Saskatchewan from 6% to 11%.[33] During the war the percentage increased sharply and many rural women operated the farm when husbands went off to war. Alderman Rigg of Winnipeg was prompted to comment: ". . . it was no use to remind the women that woman's place was the home, since many of them had been forced out into industrial life."[34] In the cities middle-class women looked increasingly for careers as the burden of housework declined. An increase in bakeries, delicatessens and canned foods shortened meal preparation; and commercial laundries, electric vacuum cleaners, washers and irons made housework lighter. Women bought more ready-made clothes and did less dress making.[35] In 1915 Nellie McClung noted that ". . . the introduction of machinery and the factory-made articles has given women more leisure than they had formerly . . ."[36]

With this intrusion into the work world, the economic and social aspirations of women were no longer tied solely to the husbands' paycheck.

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[33] Census of Canada 1921, Vol. 4, p. xiv.

[34] Grain Growers' Guide, Feb. 24, 1915, p. 22.

[35] In the United States these services and consumer items increased phenomenally prior to 1924. See Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday; An Informal History of the 1920's (New York: Harper and Row, 1931), pp. 79-80.

[36] McClung, In Times, p. 45.

New problems developed from the work situation and they felt need for the power of voting to help solve them. Cries of "equal pay for equal work" were added to the freely-borrowed rhetoric of suffragists in England: women were discriminated against by existing inheritance, property and other laws; and by men who considered them sex objects incapable of advancing beyond housework and child rearing. "The present so-called feminist movement is but woman's effort to break away from the limit of development set her by men," claimed the women's section of the Winnipeg Free Press.[37] These arguments bombarded women from the pages of Nellie McClung's In Times Like These and from the podium of countless prairie theatres and halls where she lectured. They were read in magazines and discussed in city homes and rural school houses. They were elaborated on by visiting militant British suffragists Emmeline Pankhurst and Barbara Wiley. Nor did Miss Wiley overlook local issues; she told a cheering Regina crowd that the "white slave trade" could be eliminated instantly by the woman's vote.[38]

Armed with specific objectives, and picking up a rational philosophy along the way, the suffragists marched briskly after 1910 and won the vote in less than six years; and without the violence, bitterness or intense resistance experienced by the movement in England. Except in Manitoba, their victory sparked so little controversy that it is scarcely mentioned in prairie historiography. This success obviously depended on solid support from men. After all, it was men who voted to give women the vote, and since women were politically impotent, they need not have done so unless pressured by the male population. They were. "It is splendid the way our men stand behind us," declared suffragist Mrs. S. V. Haight in 1913.[39] Why did men embrace woman suffrage so readily during the war years, when only a few years previous, most seemed unsympathetic to moral reform?

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[37] Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 2, 1912, p. 21.

[38] Canadian Annual Review (1912), p. 307.

The suffragists had always found eager allies among clergymen; the Protestant church supported moral reforms with righteous conviction. As early as 1891 a Methodist church bulletin declared that "if women were allowed to vote more rapid progress would be made in dealing legislatively with the evils arising from the traffic in intoxicating drink,"[40] and preachers across the West agreed. Backing also came from family men, who, through preference or religious conviction, did not drink, gamble, or frequent brothels. McClung had faith in their support:

> If giving the franchise to women did nothing more than double the married man's vote, it would do a splendid thing for the country, for the married man is the best voter we have; generally speaking, he is a man of family and property - surely if we can depend on anyone, we can depend upon him, and if by giving his wife a vote we can double his - we have done something to offset the irresponsible transient vote of the man who has no interest in the community.[41]

"Irresponsible transients," however, left suddenly for war and Ontario women took their places. In 1911 the sex imbalance in Western cities was loaded most heavily in favour of men but within 10 years, a flood of female arrivals reduced it to near even numbers.[42] Surprisingly, the suffragists even got some support from drinkers. Bob Edwards, editor of the Calgary Eye-Opener and a well known drunk, reluctantly supported prohibition.[43] So did James Gray's drinking father.[44] These men could not resist the temptation of demon rum and wanted the government to remove it.

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[39] Grain Growers' Guide, Nov. 19, 1913.

[40] Thompson, "Emily Stowe," p. 262.

[41] McClung, In Times, p. 49.

But the great increase in support for woman suffrage, by women as well as men, sprang from the "immigrant problem." Between 1901 and 1911 Central and East Europeans increased in the prairie provinces from 30,000 to 150,000; at that date 42 per cent of all prairie dwellers were non-Anglo-Saxon.[45] Foreign names increased substantially on the immigration rolls of 1911, 1912, and 1913, and so did support for prohibition and woman suffrage. When the Protestant Anglo-Saxon went out on an evening, got roaring drunk at the saloon, lost money playing cards, visited the brothel and returned home to beat his wife, his upbringing told him that he had done wrong. His society condemned excessive drinking and its consequences in principle if not in practice, and he did not advocate otherwise. The East Europeans, however, did not confine sin to the saloon. They drank beer or wine every day at home and served it to their wives and children. They won few friends among female prohibitionists. They were not Protestant but Catholic or Orthodox or Jewish and those churches refused to join the great crusade. Here was a threat to Anglo-Saxon morality. Of the new immigrants, Woodsworth wrote in 1907:

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[42] Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 2, Table 19.

[43] Gray, Booze, p. 83.

[44] Gray, The Boy, p. 21.

[45] Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 1, Table 35.

> [The Lithuanians] are industrious and good natured, but, like their slavic neighbors, are addicted to drunken sprees . . . Closely akin to the Bohemians are the Slovaks of North Hungary. But they are distinctly a lower grade . . . . [The [Galicians']] unpronouncible names appear so often in police court news, they figure so frequently in crimes of violence that they have created anything but a favorable impression . . . . Illiterate and ignorant as are the Galicians, the Bukowinians are even more so . . . . Most of the Poles who reach this country are peasants, or working-men from the cities and towns - far from the best class. They are poor, illiterate, and with a code of morals none too high.[46]

The W.C.T.U. added that "In Canada are wanted neither the morals nor the ideals which exist among the debased population of Europe."[47]

In 1914 Anglo-Saxon women battled immigrants on another issue. Many had fled the Russian Empire to avoid military conscription and they now refused to join the Canadian army. Suspicion was cast on the beer-drinking Germans, who, along with the Scandinavians, had previously been considered desirable immigrants, preferable at least, to the Slavs. Anglo-Saxon women who had donated husbands, sons, or nephews to the cause of democracy were bitter towards immigrants who were allowed to stay home and work. These women, confronted with a drop in family income, began to envy the jobs held by Europeans. From the outbreak of war, the Free Press noted that women were suddenly anxious to break into the job market.[48] Unable to tolerate life styles and beliefs unlike their own, as witnessed by the fact that they were prohibitionists, these women were anxious to teach immigrants the proper morals and values--to Canadianize them. The demand for unilingual and compulsory education--it was no use blazing the path of assimilation unless immigrants were forced to walk on it--was raised by several suffragists. In her memoirs, Nellie McClung revealed a hidden desire to become Minister of Education: "I had great dreams of what I could do for rural education, especially among the foreign born."[49] Hence, anti-foreign sentiment, increased by the war and probably most prevalent among Anglo-Saxon women who opposed immigrants on their lenient attitude to alcohol and prostitution, on conscription, and on the job situation at home, resulted in sudden support for woman suffrage by males who had no intention of giving up drink, but saw women as useful allies in forced assimilation. The leadership, membership, and support of woman suffrage organizations remained largely Anglo-Saxon with the exception of Icelandic women, who were active franchise campaigners in both Manitoba and Saskatchewan. But Maragaret McWilliams observed that ". . . of all the peoples who have come to Manitoba, [they] have most quickly become identified with the British population . . . ."[50]

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[46] J. S. Woodsworth, Strangers Within Our Gates (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1909), pp. 125, 132-3, 134-5, 141.

[47] Gray, Booze, p. 45.

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[48] Winnipeg Free Press, Sept. 9, 1914, p. 3.

[49] McClung, The Stream, p. 142.

[50] Margaret McWilliams, Manitoba Milestones (Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1928), p. 158.

The ethnic bias of the movement also explains the lack of activity among suffragists to improve conditions for labouring women. Although the Woman's Labor League was organized in 1910 and the Local Council of Women once took Premier Roblin on a tour of Winnipeg clothing factories, little energy was expended on labour organization, and many suffragists were vehemently anti-trade union. Almost all the women employed in Western urban industry were foreign-born, and when suffragists cried out against male discrimination in work and pay, they were referring to school teaching, store clerking, and clerical positions--occupations held by Anglo-Saxon women.[51]

In addition to the backing of forced assimilationists, woman suffrage soon enjoyed overlapping support from politically powerful farm organizations. The Manitoba Grain Growers' Association officially adopted enfranchisement in 1911, followed by the Saskatchewan G.G.A., and the United Farmers of Alberta early in 1912.[52] These organizations reaffirmed their support at subsequent annual conventions, and their official voice, the Grain Growers' Guide, became a strong woman's vote advocate, especially after the appointment of suffragist Miss Frances Beynon as women's page editor in 1912.

Prohibition was certainly one goal that farmers hoped to gain: it was offically adopted by all three provincial organizations about the same time as woman suffrage, and on at least one occassion, the U.F.A.

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[51] Census of Canada 1911, Vol. 6, Table 6, gives a breakdown of employment by foreign-born and sex.

[52] Canadian Annual Review (1912), pp. 55 and 583; and Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 29, 1913, p. 21; and Feb. 26, 1913, p. 27.

pressured the Alberta government to let women vote on a prohibition plebiscite. Although the Mormon, Temperance Colonization Society and other fundamentalist settlements were prohibitionist in origin, it is difficult to determine why they campaigned for provincial prohibition. In the city this movement was inspired by women who suffered from, or feared, the consequences of their husbands' nightly escapades. On the farm, however, the husband might work for more than a week before he had a chance to visit the town saloon. Similarly, he had less contact with East European life styles, owing to the ethnic block settlement pattern of most rural areas, than did the urban Anglo-Saxon who was confronted with frightening and unfamiliar new cultures almost daily.[53] The Grain Growers' Association stated that it was anti-liquor because ". . . the economic waste caused by this traffic is appalling, and . . . its influence politically, physically, socially and morally is degrading to our people."[54] The reasoning of the U.F.A. was identical,[55] but these conditions did not plague the farms nearly as much as the cities.

Perhaps the stand was taken because local option prohibition was not effective so long as nearby urban centres remained wet, or maybe it was based on a feeling of anti-urbanism generally. Western farmers had consciously chosen rural life over urban; they might have drifted into the cities of Eastern North America, but they struck for the rural frontier instead. Throughout Canada the strain of booming urbanization gave rise to the belief that the city was conducive to immorality,[56] and the Grain Growers' Guide supported this view by extolling the virtues of rural life. Urban dwellers often agreed.

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[53] The membership of the farm organizations appears to have been predominantly Anglo-Saxon.

[54] Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 20, 1915, p. 16.

[55] J. P. Bate, "Prohibition and the U.F.A.," Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Autumn, 1970), p. 4. Bates argues that farmers, caught up in a growing faith for the "scientific," were particularly impressed by new medical studies that revealed the effects of alcohol on the body. Perhaps this aspect of the prohibition movement has not been given enough consideration by historians.

Support for women's votes also grew out of the ideological fervour of the farm protest movement. Convinced that political parties were controlled by Eastern capitalists, farm groups advocated grass-roots democracy--direct legislation through the referendum, the recall and group government. Given this plea for democracy, they felt compelled to support woman suffrage: ". . . the honor of the whole Grain Growers' Association is at stake [in implementing] . . . this great democratic reform," declared the Guide.[57] All three provincial organizations were also quick to admit women as full and equal members.

Farmers became so zealous in their support of women's franchise that they sometimes appeared more enthusiastic than their wives. The Guide conducted a poll among its male readers in 1913 and suffrage supporters won by a landslide,[58] and although the Women's Grain Growers' Association and the Women's Auxiliary of the U.F.A. became staunch suffrage advocates, they were not formed until 1915, several years after their parent organizations had already adopted that principle. Thus, Anglo-Saxon farm women, backed solidly by their husbands, joined a movement led predominantly by urban career women.

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[56] P. Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920." (Xerox copy of Professor Rutherford's typed paper in my possession), pp. 1-2.

[57] Grain Growers' Guide, Sept. 15, 1915, p. 5.

[58] Ibid., Feb. 12, 1913.

Many urban businessmen also threw their support behind woman suffrage. Western cities were engaged in a frantic battle to secure railways and industries that promised to stimulate growth. The promotional literature printed by each Board of Trade claimed that their city possessed all the attributes of a modern progressive business centre--including respectability. Regina entrepreneurs, in their fight with Saskatoon for the provincial university, promised a "well established home life, a strong religious and moral atmosphere, and those institutions for the upbuilding of sturdy morals and physical strength."[59] The same claim was made by every industry-hungry town in the West. And increasingly after 1905, explosive urban growth created a class of nouveau riche that strived to present itself as socially sophisticated.[60]

The struggle for respectability often took bizarre forms. Calgary, for example, passed a by-law in 1911 prohibiting citizens from spitting tobacco juice on the streets.[61] At the time, the city's thoroughfares were filled alternately with dust or mud, always with manure, and the smell of horses was complemented by that of outdoor privies. The practise of segregating brothels was largely inspired, not by a desire for prostitution, but by a wish to keep it well hidden. Businessmen also wanted to close rowdy saloons and keep drunks off the street in order to give their projected image of the city some basis in reality. Gray claims that many businessmen supported prohibition--not for themselves; they would continue to drink in private clubs--but for unruly vagabonds that cluttered city streets.[62] Many of these men, interested in any urban reform that promised to lure new population to the city, saw women as agents of civilization who could eliminate frontier vulgarity if only they had the vote.

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[59] Earl Drake, Regina, The Queen City (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1955), p. 133.

[60] This can be seen in the creation of exclusive residential districts and private social clubs, and in the self-image projected by Western businessmen in the biographical sections of books that they commissioned.

[61] Gray, Red Lights, p. 141.

Support came as well from clergymen of the "social gospel," Protestant ministers such as J. S. Woodsworth, A. E. Smith, Salem Bland, and others who believed that the church had an active role to play in eradicating slums, poverty, miserable working conditions, political corruption, and other less appealing aspects of capitalism, and who regarded women as potential allies for social as well as moral reform.

Underlying the entire support for woman suffrage among social gospellers, clergymen in general, forced assimilationists, farmers, and businessmen--who often differed radically in objectives, but nonetheless considered themselves progressive reformers--was the belief that women were morally superior to men, and each group of male supporters believed that women, all women, would support their particular idea of reform. This belief was stated by each group time and time again. "The ballot in the hands of women will give them power to carry on those great moral and social reforms that depend upon legislation," stated Ontario clergyman G. Jackson.[63] In advocating suffrage, the local U.F.A. at Lake Thelma, Alberta, stated, "we believe they would cast their votes on the right side of all questions affecting the home, the community and the nation . . . ."[64] "What this will mean [woman suffrage] for the future of Saskatchewan, no person can foretell," speculated the *Regina Leader*, "but that it will make for moral uplift, for a better tone in political discussion and cleaner politics is almost certain."[65] F. J. Dixon of the Independent Labour Party in Winnipeg argued for woman suffrage in the name of democracy and added: ". . . experience teaches that they will exercise a humanizing influence."[66] The *Grain Growers' Guide* published an article claiming that women had cleaned up the state of California as a result of the franchise.[67]

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[62] Gray, *Booze*, pp. 14-15.

This cloak of moral superiority emerged from the liquor question--the saloon was solely a male institution; women, children, and Indians were strictly forbidden--and many suffragists wore it with pride. Nellie McClung believed that women were morally superior as a result of motherhood. Any women who had raised children, she argued, would not tolerate suffering in the world; they would extend the joy and love of the home to embrace the whole of society. "The hand that rocks the cradle does not rule the world," she observed, "If it did, human life would be held dearer and the world would be a sweeter, cleaner, safer place than it is now!"[68] Not only would women sterilize politics and bring tranquility to domestic society, they would eliminate war:

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[63] Thompson, "Emily Stowe," p. 258.

[64] *Grain Growers' Guide*, June 11, 1913, p. 11.

[65] Catherine L. Cleverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 82. Cleverdon quotes the *Regina Leader*, Mar. 15, 1916.

[66] F. J. Dixon, "Let the Women Vote," *Grain Growers' Guide*, May 26, 1915, p. 19.

[67] Lewis and Mary Theiss, "What California Women Did With Their Ballots," *Grain Growers' Guide*, March 5, 1913.

> I could not help but think that if there had been women in the German Reichstag, women with authority behind them, when the Kaiser began to lay his plans for the war, the results might have been different. I do not believe women with boys of their own would ever sit down and wilfully plan slaughter.[69]

These words coincided with the formation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1915 which fought to have cadet training eliminated from Canadian schools.[70] Many male supporters of suffrage accepted the moral superiority of women without question and Bob Edwards of the Calgary Eye Opener was one of the few to publically cast doubt on the matter: "We actually need women in politics. Women could never possibly participate in any graft system owing to their inability to keep a secret."[71]

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[68] McClung, In Times, p. 22. See also pp. 14-15, and McClung, The Stream, p. 27, for this argument.

[69] McClung, In Times, p. 89.

[70] Richard Allen, The Social Passion; Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 334.

[71] Calgary Eye Opener, Mar. 18, 1916, p. 1.

Reinforced by legions of men,[72] the suffrage organizations, most of which accepted men as full members, advanced on governments to press their demands. Opposed to them were ardent drinkers, single young men, many immigrants, and those associated with the manufacture, distribution and sale of alcoholic beverages, or with brothels or gambling operations. These groups were hard pressed to present logical reasons for denying women the vote: it would corrupt them, it would unsex them, it would lead to domestic squabbles, they would vote too little, they would vote too much, they would vote sentimentally, it would cause the birth rate to plummet, it would result in sloppy house work and unpalatable meals, they were too frail physically to stand the rigours of campaign excitement, it was contrary to Biblical teachings--who would look after the children when Momma went out to vote? These and other arguments were presented at anti-prohibition speeches and even, on occasion, by women. McClung had no use for women who opposed suffrage. "Gentle ladies," she called them, who relied on sexuality, tears and fainting to get their way, whose ears could not stand to hear an unpleasantness, and who worried more over ". . . a stain in the carpet than on the soul."[73]

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[72] The position of organized labour is ambiguous. Cleverdon, Women Suffrage, p. 10, claims that unions generally supported suffrage because the influx of women into the labour market forced wages down and they wanted them to organize. They also wanted governments to legislate minimum standards in wages and working conditions for women, and felt that with the vote, the task could be accomplished more easily. I have been unable to find any information to substantiate or discredit this analysis. On at least one occasion, the Calgary Trades and Labour Council joined a petition drive for suffrage, as did the Winnipeg T.L.C.; and two Winnipeg politicians, Dixon and Rigg, both of whom drew on labour support, supported the movement. On the other hand, those unions associated directly or indirectly with the brewing, distilling, liquor distribution, and hotel industries often spoke out against suffrage, and the T.L.C. was often silent on prohibition. Owing to a lack of any other information, I have excluded trade unions from the text.

At first the suffragists pressed for the vote for property-holding females in municipal and school board elections and by 1912 had largely succeeded. Backed by the farm organizations, they pressed provincial governments to introduce dower laws that would make husbands and wives joint owners of property, probably to increase the women's franchise in local option elections on prohibition.

As part of a catch-all movement known as "progressive reform," suffragists next struck for the provincial franchise and only in Manitoba did the government fail to appreciate the force of the gathering storm. Premier Roblin, who headed the Manitoba Conservatives from 1900 to 1915, governed the most difficult of the three provinces. Although farmers were the dominant political force, Roblin had to serve the needs of the powerful Winnipeg business community as well. While balancing between these interests, he attempted to marshall political support among the massive immigrant population. Rumours that his party bought immigrant votes with whiskey were almost as common as the claim that he was a paid hack of the liquor interests. He did not oppose the establishment of a Ukrainian teachers' college nor multilingual schools. Following a 1912 by-election in the largely Ukrainian inter-lakes region, it was discovered that $93,000 of the $130,000 provincial budget for roads had been spent in that district.[74]

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[73] McClung, In Times, pp. 30-31.

Roblin's successful bid for the East European vote meant that he could not easily support unilingual schools, compulsory school attendance laws, or prohibition; each of which were linked to woman suffrage. Roblin despised the movement and said so:

> I am utterly opposed to woman's suffrage in every shape and form. I think too much of woman to have her entangled in the mesh of politics. She would be stooping from the pedestal on which she has sat for centuries.[75]

His comment that suffrage was supported only by "short-haired women and long-haired men,"[76] was not well received by the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association.

Roblin had refused to allow a house vote on the measure previously, but on January 27, 1914, the first major delegation of suffrage groups marched to the legislature to ask for the vote. Roblin told them that nice women did not want to vote, added that it would break up the home, and sent them away.[77] The Political Equality League, meanwhile, had prearranged a Mock Parliament for the following evening at the Walker Theatre, a tactic that suffragists had used elsewhere. Women played the role of legislators and received a delegation of men asking for the vote. McClung, as Premier Roblin, congratulated them on their manly appearance, but denied their request because they might vote too much or become "unsettled" by political life.[78]

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[74] Lionel Orlikow, "The Reform Movement in Manitoba, 1910-1915," Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces, ed. by Donald Swainson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 219.

[75] Canadian Annual Review (1912), p. 308.

[76] McClung, The Stream, p. 114.

[77] Winnipeg Free Press, Jan. 28, 1914.

The Liberals, meanwhile, beaten unmercifully in past elections, were picking up support from discontented urban and rural Conservatives. They introduced resolutions for both prohibition and suffrage in February, 1914.[79] The Conservatives defeated the motions, but in the provincial election of that year, the Liberals almost won. Undaunted by near defeat, the Conservatives rejected a third bid for enfranchisement, this time from delegates to the first annual Woman Suffrage Convention held in Winnipeg in February, 1915.[80] But within a few months luck interjected in favour of the suffragists. Contractors building the new legislative buildings corrupted the Conservative Party to the amount of $900,000,[81] the story broke, and in May the government resigned. In the ensuing election the Liberals grabbed 42 of 49 seats. The new Premier, T. C. Norris, had promised women the vote if they presented a petition with signatures equal to 15 per cent of the registered male vote, and in December the Political Equality League swamped him with 40,000 names, twice the required figure.[82] Women received the vote in January, 1916. Yet, ironically, women were not to cast ballots in the upcoming plebiscite on prohibition, that great moral issue from which the movement sprang.

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[78] Ibid., Jan. 29, 1914; and McClung, The Stream, pp. 117-22.

[79] Canadian Annual Review (1914), p. 584.

[80] Grain Growers' Guide, Feb. 24, 1915, p. 22.

[81] Orlikow, "Reform Movement," p. 227.

[82] Grain Growers' Guide, May 26, 1915, p. 11; and Dec. 29, 1915.

blossomed and flourished. Norris announced that it would be impossible to register women before the March plebiscite,[83] but male supporters of suffrage had grown in such numbers that they voted for prohibition by a 50,500 to 26,500 count.[84] Even Winnipeg voted dry.

In Saskatchewan and Alberta the women's votes movement did not encounter such rough waters, largely because Liberal Premiers Walter Scott and A. L. Sifton remained receptive to Anglo-Saxon farm demands, and did not attempt to stray from this powerful base. The first woman suffrage resolution was introduced in the Saskatchewan legislature late in 1912, but the motion was not brought to a vote. The government claimed that women themselves had not shown enough interest, yet most legislators expressed a desire for enfranchisement,[85] possibly because the Saskatchewan Grain Growers had advocated suffrage earlier in the year. The Grain Growers' Guide immediately launched a petition drive: "Make your correspondence such a burden to those who care for the Premier's mail that they will know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you want the vote."[86] A second motion for suffrage, meanwhile, was ruled out in early 1913, again, until the response of women was known.

But although affirmative letters filled Scott's mail box over the next two years, he hesitated to take action. Similarly, he had rejected at least six major proposals for prohibition between 1909 and 1915, but his refusals grew more polite each time.[87] Then in February, 1915, he received a strong pro-suffrage demand from the Saskatchewan Grain Growers[88] and a petition of 10,000 signatures from the Provincial Equal Franchise Board.[89] The following month he announced that all saloons would be closed without compensation on July 1, and would be replaced by a few centralized government liquor stores.[90] The turn-about came at a time when Scott might have anticipated the fall of Roblin's Manitoba government. Continued pressure for woman suffrage--riding on a moral and social purpose that had surpassed even prohibition--resulted in legislation that became law in the spring of 1916. With women registered in the province, full prohibition went into effect on January 1, 1917.

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[83] Spence, Prohibition, p. 425; and Canadian Annual Review (1915), p. 636.

[84] Spence, Prohibition, p. 426.

[85] Christine MacDonald, "How Saskatchewan Women Got the Vote," Saskatchewan History, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Oct., 1948), p. 2; and Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 8, 1913, p. 6.

[86] Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 8, 1913, p. 10.

Developments in Alberta were almost identical. Votes for women were advocated from 1910 onward and in 1914 a large delegation of suffrage groups presented the house with a petition of 12,000 signatures. Sifton's response was the same as Scott's:

> My own personal opinion is that there are only two logical reasons against equal franchise - all the others have been played out altogether - that of doubling the expense, and uncertainty as to the desire for the franchise by the women themselves.[91]

Pressure for woman suffrage, led by the U.F.A. and Nellie McClung, who had since left Manitoba, increased in 1915 and Sifton, after resisting temperance pressure for years, announced a summer plebiscite on prohibition. The measure passed by 58,300 to 37,200 votes and was scheduled to become effective in July, 1916.[92] Following the summer plebiscite, A. L. Sifton announced in a letter to James Speakman, President of the U.F.A., that women would receive the vote in the spring of 1916.[93]

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[87] Spence, Prohibition, pp. 428-37.

[88] Grain Growers' Guide, Feb. 24, 1915.

[89] MacDonald, "How Saskatchewan," p. 6.

[90] Spence, Prohibition, p. 437; and Gray, Booze, p. 81.

[91] Canadian Annual Review (1914), p. 652.

In all three provinces both prohibition and woman suffrage was promised by the legislators in 1915; a year when single young men were leaving for the war, women were entering the work force in large numbers, anti-foreign sentiment reached a new peak, and when backing from a consortium of males became particularly strong.[94] Roblin's fall in 1915 has been largely attributed to the corruption scandals, but the Alberta government faced similar charges the same year, and if Roblin had not been forced to resign, he might have been forced to reverse his position on suffrage and prohibition.[95]

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[92] Spence, Prohibition, p. 457.

[93] Grain Growers' Guide, Sept. 22, 1915, p. 5.

[94] Woman suffrage at the federal level in 1918 appears to have triumphed for a different reason. Cleverdon, Woman Suffrage, argues that the federal government wanted suffrage to increase support for conscription, reasoning that women with relatives in the army would support such as measure. In 1917 women with husbands at war were allowed to vote under the War-time Election Act of 1917 and full suffrage was granted in 1918. Brian D. Tennyson, "Premier Hearst, the War, and Votes for Women," Ontario History, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Sept., 1965), p. 43, argues that pressure from the federal government -- arising out of the conscription issue -- played a significant role in granting women the vote in Ontario in 1917.

[95] It is interesting that in the election following the scandal, the new Conservative leader endorsed prohibition and was sympathetic to woman suffrage.

Women had won the vote. Their entry into public life was most noticeable in Alberta where Louise McKinney, president of the W.C.T.U., and Roberta Macadans were elected to the legislature in 1917, followed by Irene Parlby, Minister Without Portfolio, in 1919, and Nellie McClung in 1921. In 1916 Emily Murphy and Alice Jamieson were appointed judges in Edmonton and Calgary, the first such appointments in the British Empire. Yet suffrage did not radically alter the political and social life of the West as its supporters had claimed it would. Women were partly responsible for the social legislation concerning woman and child welfare that passed after 1916.[96] In Manitoba they were partly responsible for the introduction of unilingual schools and compulsory school attendance laws. They were partly responsible for prohibition, which was impossible to enforce and was later reappealed, but they did not eliminate prostitution. Women did not make politics noticeably cleaner and they did not exert unified pressure to instigate the reforms advocated by various groups of male suffrage supporters. Nor was war permanently eliminated. In short, they failed to live up to their reputation of moral superiority, a fact that Nellie McClung begrudgingly admitted in 1945:

> I cannot refrain from saying that the sight of women lined up in front of the Government Liquor Stores fills me with a withering sense of disappointment. Of course I know women have as much right to drink as men. But I wish they wouldn't. It is not in keeping with their character.[97]

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[96] In Alberta, 18 acts of this nature were passed. Una MacLean, "The Honourable Irene Parlby," Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring, 1959), p. 5.

[97] McClung, The Stream, p. 181.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FRONTIER AND URBANIZATION

Canadian historians have often pretended that the settlement of the three prairie provinces was very much a rural affair. In truth, one third of the pioneers who headed West prior to 1916 found themselves living, not on the farm, but in the country villages, the bustling rail towns, and the fast-rising cities that sprang form the prairie. Although many of these urban places[1] were among the fastest growing cities in Canadian history, little is known about their development. Basic questions concerning their founding, location, growth, size, and function remain unanswered. An examination of these processes, however, quickly reveals that geography alone cannot explain the prairie urban pattern. The activities of railway companies and those individuals who stood to gain most by urban growth--real estate speculators, construction contractors, merchants--were equally important in determining the development of prairie urban centres. High property qualifications for public office made it easy for such individuals to dominate city hall and their collective promotional skill often shaped the destiny of their towns.

Before 1870 the only commercial centres in the West were scattered Hudson's Bay Company posts. Managed by a few fur traders, they could scarcely claim urban stature and only the two largest would become important in the agricultural age: Fort Edmonton on the North Saskatchewan River had a population of about 200, while another 1,000 lived near Fort

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[1] The word urban will be used throughout this chapter to mean incorporated villages, towns, and cities in order to deliniate the farm from the non-farm population.

Garry (Winnipeg) at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.[2] The early 1870's brought a trickle of settlers to the West and Winnipeg developed as an agricultural centre. Other towns appeared: Prince Albert and Battleford on the Saskatchewan, and a number of lesser villages in southern Manitoba.

The largest centres hugged the shorelines of navigable rivers and were served by steamship. But prairie rivers were shallow and few in number; they froze in winter and flowed uselessly to the Arctic. Railroads quickly replaced them as carriers of trade. The Pembina Branch opened in 1878. This government-built road originated north of Winnipeg and ran south to the United States border where it connected to a St. Paul line. Two new towns, Emerson and Selkirk, sprang into prominent existence along its side while Winnipeg-St. Boniface leaped ahead in population.[3] When the Canadian Paciifc transcontinental swept across the prairies two years later, it left whole new towns in its wake: Brandon, Virden, Moosomin, Regina, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Medicine Hat, Calgary, and many others.

This sudden appearance of towns was caused by the fact that railways facilitated the use of recent advances in agricultural technology. Between 1870 and 1914 the crude subsistence agriculture of the Red River valley was transformed into a highly mechanized enterprise.[4] The prairie pioneer was no self-sufficient farmer but an agricultural industrialist engaged in commercial trading. He produced a large surplus of grain and was a heavy consumer of manufactured goods. He needed grain shipping depots, farm implements, hardware goods, wagons, harness, lumber, and other supplies. He needed banking services to finance these investments. He needed consumer goods that he could not make for himself: clothing and staple foodstuffs. As a result, every rural community needed a town, both as a shipping point that gathered surplus grain, and as a distribution point that fanned manufactured goods back into the countryside. To fulfill these functions it was imperative that towns develop along railway lines. And because improving agricultural technology and expanding railway networks continually increased the commercial nature of farming, towns became increasingly important to the settlement process.[5]

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[2] All subsequent population figures for urban places are taken from Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 2, Tables 8-12; or Census of the Prairie Provinces 1906 or 1916.

[3] Although both towns were founded prior to 1878 (Emerson in 1873, Selkirk in 1875) neither showed any promise of development until the railway arrived.

Armed with this knowledge, enterprising men realized that great profits might await the professional town builder and promoter. Their hope of course was that the town could not remain a town, but would explode into a thriving frontier metropolis. The usual scheme was to buy up vacant land, divide it into lots, advertise the surrounding country as great farm land, and grow rich by selling town lots to merchants. The merchants in turn hoped to reap a fortune outfitting new settlers.

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[4] In the United States it took 61 hours of labour to produce one acre of wheat in 1860. By the 1890's the same task could be accomplished in three and one half hours. Ray Ginger, Age of Excess (London: Macmillan, 1965), p. 38.

[5] This is supported by the fact that in 1881 only about eight per cent of the population in the prairie provinces lived in incorporated urban places, but by 1911 this had increased to 35 per cent. During the same period the rural population increased from 108,000 to 860,000. These and subsequent figures on rural-urban distribution are all taken from Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 1, Table 7a.

The urban pioneers knew that the greatest profits in trade and real estate would go to those towns located on the proposed transcontinental. What the Pembina Branch had done for Emerson, Winnipeg, and Selkirk, the Canadian Pacific Railway promised to do for many other towns. Communities along the proposed route were soon invaded by speculators and profiteers. Selkirk, 20 miles north of Winnipeg, was selected as the major rail centre, and the town was enjoying a sharp boom by 1880.

The decision spelled doom to Winnipeggers, but they marshalled their forces and declared war on the smaller towns. City council promised the Canadian Pacific Railway a bridge over the Red River, a $200,000 subsidy, free land, and property tax exemptions forever in return for the main line, a station, and rail shops.[6] Neither Selkirk nor Emerson could match this generosity, but Winnipeg held yet another advantage. The Hudson's Bay Company owned 1,750 acres of land near the city and the majority share holder, Donald Smith, was also a major share holder in the Canadian Pacific Railway. Smith had the power to help the Winnipeg entrepreneurs and he was happy to use it. The city secured the transcontinental and Smith's company immediately sold its real estate to

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[6] R. C. Bellan, "Rails Across the Red — Selkirk or Winnipeg," Papers Read Before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series 3, No. 17 (1960-61), pp. 74-76; and W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 194.

Canadian Pacific for $2,000,000.[7] The railway told Selkirk it could also remain on the line if it offered the company a subsidy of $125,000. The town was unable to raise the money and was bypassed.[8] Emerson tried to promote its own railway and went bankrupt.

While those towns laguished, Winnipeg became a glittering example of successful town promotion. Between 1871 and 1881 its permanent population swelled from 1,000 to 9,000. Perhaps another 10,000 transients roamed its streets in 1881. Real estate prices skyrocketed. Lots changed hands with amazing frequency and soon ranged from $20,000 to $40,000 in price.[9] Stories of quick and fabulous fortunes splattered the newspapers. Speculators bought farmlands nearby and they bought them far away. Maps were falsified. Realors sent unscrupulous agents to sell Winnipeg lots in Ontario. The speculation fever quickly spread to other towns. Portage la Prairie, with a population of about 1,000, had 30 real estate offices.[10]

While some men rode to fortune on real estate, others made money outfitting pioneers. During the settlement period of each prairie district frontier conditions often made merchandising particularly profitable; there was a large and rapid influx of rural pioneers all in immediate need of supplies and town services, and all having ready cash, in varying amounts, to pay for them. During the 1881 boom a shortage of farm supplies had caused prices to rise sharply and aspiring merchants poured into the towns to meet the demand. One man who took full advantage of the situation was J. H. Ashdown. Arriving in Winnipeg in 1869 and setting up a tinsmith shop in the back of a liquor store, he soon turned to selling pioneers much needed hardwares. By 1881 Ashdown was on his way to becoming one of the largest wholesalers in Winnipeg and one of the city's most ardent promoters.[11] Other merchants began buying Western grain and selling it in the East, foreshadowing the appearance of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange in 1887. The merchants needed farmers to keep them in business and through advertising, every town urged pioneers to settle nearby and not within the economic hinterland of a rival.[12]

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[7] Bellan, "Rails," pp. 73-4 and 77; and J. M. S. Careless, "The Development of the Winnipeg Business Community, 1870-1890," Royal Society of Canada Transactions, Series 4, Vol. 8 (1970), pp. 245-6.

[8] Bellan, "Rails," p. 76.

[9] Articles in Manitoba Free Press, 1881.

[10] Margaret McWilliams, Manitoba Milestones (Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1928), p. 126.

Existing towns had failed to match Winnipeg's promotional success, but when rumours of proposed Canadian Pacific Railway branch lines began to circulate, entrepreneurs thought that a brand new town might arise to equal prominence. A syndicate of businessmen laid out the uninhabited town site of Rapid City, and by 1881 speculators were griding town sites everywhere. Farmers joined in the frenzy. They threw their plows aside, divided their homesteads into lots, and opened real estate offices. Rapid City, Clark's Crossing, Mountain City, Minnedosa, Dominion City, Gladstone--all were designed to fill the pockets of hopeful town builders. Jim Coolican in Winnipeg specialized in selling lots in non-existent towns throughout southern Manitoba and apparantly did well promoting a fantasy named Cartwright.[13]

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[11] A brief biography appears in F. H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba, Vol. 2 (Winnipeg: S. J. Clarke, 1913), pp. 721-723.

[12] Much of the farm land immediately surrounding Winnipeg had been established as half-breed reserves. The city convinced the federal government to liquidate the reserves, throwing them open to pioneer settlement. Years later, in 1887, the Board of Trade created the Joint Committee on Vacant Lands to lure farmers onto unsettled homesteads.

These activities shrank to insignificance, however, compared with those of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the greatest prairie town builder of all. Although the company had learned from the Selkirk-Winnipeg rivalry that it was profitable to play one town against another, a new idea had fostered. Why run the transcontinental across the northern prairies where town building profiteers already lurked in ambush? Why not drive through the empty south, build new towns, and share the profits with no one? This, argues historian Pierre Berton, was the reasoning of J. J. Hill, who in 1881 convinced fellow syndicate members to change the route by some 200 miles.[14] The plan was sound. The company already owned 25 million acres of prairie land, a subsidy from the federal government; and it could decide arbitrarily the location of yards, shops, and stations.

By changing the route, however, the company did not completely avoid the speculators, largely because company employees leaked proposed town locations to friends. It was known, for example, that a divisional point would be needed near Grand Valley, some one hundred miles west of Winnipeg, and speculators soon secured land in that vicinity. Dougald McVicar settled on the proposed town site and at first the company was willing to buy his land. But when McVicar and his brother held out for a larger sum, the company simply moved two miles west and built the station.[15] Grand Valley tried to compete with the booming new town of Brandon, but was destined to fail; no one was going to buy lots in a town where the train refused to stop. The Brandon story was repeated many times. Whenever speculators bought land near a proposed town site, the company simply moved away from the crowd and onto land it already owned.

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[13] Pierre Berton, The Last Spike: The Great Railway 1881-1885 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), pp. 60-61.

[14] Ibid., pp. 18-19. Berton presents a convincing rejection of traditional interpretations of the route change.

Halfway across the prairies, however, the Canadian Pacific Railway confronted a speculator of considerable political influence. In 1882 Edgar Dewdney, the federally appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, was authorized to select the site for a new capital city.[16] Speculators were guessing that its location would be the scenic Qu'Appelle valley where water and wood were plentiful, but Dewdney and a few associates were buying up Hudson's Bay Company lands on a dry treeless plain to the south. It was one of those holdings, a certain Section 26, that Dewdney selected for the capital. The Canadian

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[15] MacDonald Coleman, The Face of Yesterday: The Story of Brandon Manitoba (Brandon: Jr. Chamber of Commerce, 1957), pp. 12-13; and Berton, Last Spike, pp. 25-6.

[16] The North West Territories included all of present day Alberta and Saskatchewan which were not created as provinces until 1905. The capital had been established at Battleford in 1877, but with a change in the Canadian Pacific Railway route, the decision was made to locate the capital on the railway.

Pacific Railway had other plans, suggesting a location on its own land to the east. To satisfy both political friends, the Macdonald government arranged a compromise; hald the capital was built on Section 26 and half on adjacent railway lands. The town of Regina was thus born. The Canadian Pacific Railway, however, was shrewd enough to locate the station well on its own half and consequently, it soon outstripped Dewdney in real estate sales. Dewdney retaliated by pressuring Ottawa to establish all public buildings on his side. Again a compromise was reached and Regina's government buildings were strung out for over a mile.[17] Unwilling to compete with Dewdney any longer, the Canadian Pacific Railway moved its divisional point some 40 miles west where it estblished the rival town of Moose Jaw. This was a direct blow to the fledging capital for it thwarted hopes for early branch line construction out of the city. Not even Dewdney's successful attempt to wrestle the headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police away from Fort Macleod compensated for the loss.

From Moose Jaw the railway rolled westward, dashing the hopes of speculators along the way and throwing up new towns behind it. In 1883 the line reached the Mounted Police outpost of Fort Calgary, established in 1875. Here speculators squatted on nearby Section 14, as Section 15 had been reserved by the government for a Police horse pasture. Under the Canadian Pacific Railway charter, however, the company was entitled to assume ownership of any odd numbered section and it easily persuaded parliament to revoke the horse pasture reserve.[18] The station was built in the very middle of Section 15.

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[17] For a more detailed account see Earl Drake, Regina, The Queen City (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1955), pp. 10-13; John W. Powers, History of Regina (Regina: by the author, 1887); Berton, Last Spike, pp. 113-24.

The speculators who crowded along the transcontinental actually benefitted the Canadian Pacific Railway. Though unable to realize a profit on the initial founding of the towns, they still had faith in the growth potential of prairie urban centres. As a result, they were Canadian Pacific's first customers, immediately buying thousands of lots and touching off speculative booms in Calgary, Medicine Hat, Moose Jaw, Regina, and Brandon. In Calgary, for example, the squatters violently protested the location of the train station, but within the first week of sales they bought 260 Calgary lots, paying $300 to $450 for each.[19] To sell its urban real estate, the Canadian Pacific Railway created a subsidiary, the Canada North-West Land Company, which bought all 47 transcontinental town sites for $13.5 million.[20]

In spite of the town building mania of the 1878-1883 period, the dreams of the urban pioneers were largely unrealized. Dozens of would-be towns were never built and those that were failed to grow. By 1901 only one prairie town boasted more than 6,000 residents. The Winnipeg area, with a population of 45,000, stood alone as the successful realization of speculators and merchants.

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[18] Grant MacEwan, Calgary Cavalcade: From Fort to Fortune (Edmonton: Institute of Applied Art, 1958), p. 43.

[19] Calgary Herald, Jan. 16, 1884, p. 1.

[20] The Canada North-West Land Company (Calgary: unpublished file prepared by Glenbow-Alberta Institute), p. 2. The Canadian Pacific Railway itself continued to sell branch-line town lots and the Land Co. was eventually brought under direct control.

The first setback came in 1882 when Winnipeg realtors attempted to promote the village of Edmonton, 200 miles removed from the proposed Canadian Pacific line. Lots which the Edmonton Bulletin evaluated at \$20 were advertised for \$300[21] and none were bought. It was the first indication that spiralling real estate prices were based on speculative insanity rather than real values. In 1883 Winnipeg real estate prices fell sharply and many millionaires discovered that their fortunes were only on paper.

The problem was that most regions had few farmers; without farmers, prairie towns were stripped of their reason for existence. Between 1881 and 1891 the entire prairie population increased from 118,000 to only 251, 000. Most of this growth occurred in southern Manitoba, and it was there where new towns emerged in the late 1880's and the 1890's. Rail spurs criss-crossed the region and railway-built towns emerged to serve the rural pioneers. Though not entirely absent, the speculative building and promotional craze of 1881 was not a prominent feature of town development, largely because urban dwellers finally realized that the incoming trickle of settlers was not likely to become a flood. It was a period of low grain prices and a time when most pioneers preferred the free homesteads of the northern United States. As a result, new towns appeared more gradually, and grew more slowly. By 1901 only six of the Manitoba towns established after 1883 had populations exceeding 1,000. Urban growth in the Territories was even less extensive. The early speculation and railway construction that caused centres like Calgary and Regina to jump from the prairie into bustling little towns of 2,000 quickly faded. The southern prairies were experiencing drought and the urban hinterlands were put to a much less intensive use than farming--cattle ranching--and although ranchers needed shipping facilities, goods, and services, they were too few and thinly spread to stimulate much urban growth. By 1901 Calgary, the largest ranching town, could claim only 4,4000 residents.

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[21] Edmonton Bulletin, April 20, 1882.

The two most important prairie communities to emerge during this period were Lethbridge, centre of the new coal-mining industry in southern Alberta, and Strathcona. The founding of the latter town provoked the most bitter urban rivalry of the 1890's. In 1891 the construction of a Canadian Pacific Railway line from Calgary to Edmonton began. From the north bank of the Saskatchewan, Edmonton businessmen waited in eager anticipation. Denied the railway ten years earlier, it now promised to bring settlers, trade, and real estate profits. They watched the railway crawl to the southern bank of the river--and stop. Here the Canadian Pacific Railway proceeded to build the rival town of Strathcona. Edmonton was enraged. Frank Oliver's Bulletin accused the company of trying to destroy the older town and Oliver was right. In 1892 the company persuaded the federal government to transfer the important land titles office from Edmonton to Strathcona. Edmonton businessmen attempted to prevent the move by physical force and armed Mounties were needed to supervise the transfer.[22] The federal government solved the conflict only by opening land offices in both towns. For years Edmonton fought for a railway bridge across the valley but without success until it raised $25,000 to help finance the project in 1902.[23] The completion of the bridge ended the rivalry and in 1912 the towns amalgamated. The founding of towns on opposite sides of a river occurred many times over, but the rivalries it generated usually disappeared when bridges facilitated easy transportation and allowed the towns to grow as one.

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[22] An account of the event is given in the Edmonton Bulletin, June 20 and 23, 1892.

Aside from Lethbridge and Strathcona, however, urban development remained slow throughout the 1890's. Towns along the transcontinental sat quietly on the empty prairie and experienced no significant growth for a full 20 years after their founding.

Between 1900 and 1916 the tranquility was shattered. These years witnessed the most dramatic migration of settlers in Canadian history; the population of the prairie provinces swelled from 420,000 to 1,700,000. The town building and promotion mania of 1881 was revived on a grand scale, but this time with justification. Thousands of new farming communities needed the rail centres, the services, and the goods that towns could provide. After 1900, over 600 new towns with instant populations of 100 or more mushroomed from the prairie. Hundreds of villages cropped up between them. It was Canada's greatest period of railway expansion and by 1916 steel rails served nearly all the prairie communities. The railway companies founded most of the towns and the

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[23] James G. MacGregor, Edmonton: A History (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1967), pp. 122-3.

Canadian Pacific Railway alone built hundreds of villages,[24] mostly in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The growth of the new towns tended to follow a pattern, one that characterized many pre-1900 villages as well. Because the town was essential to rural settlement, it was often founded before a single farmer arrived in the area, or else developed simultaneously with the first influx of rural pioneers. It was born with a train station and a grain elevator--to which a general store was quickly added. The general store offered the advantage of providing a variety of different goods to a small population. As settlers poured onto nearby homesteads, the general store was usually duplicated and then supplemented by more specialized business: an implement dealer, harnass and wagon shop, lumber yard, hardware store, bank, and blacksmith shop. At this point the town people themselves required a school, a post office, and a livery stable, and were soon able to support less essential services: a cafe, barber shop and "pool hall," a hotel and beer parlor, a newspaper, and churches. The original general stores usually began to specialize in groceries. One other business that often appeared was the speculator's

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[24] The Canadian Pacific Railway claimed that it established a total of nearly 800 towns in the prairie provinces and that total sales of urban real estate amounted to $16 million. Department of Public Relations, Canadian Pacific Facts and Figures (Montreal: Canadian Pacific Foundation Library, 1946), p. 238. The majority of these towns were probably mere sidings where the population never reached 100. The Glenbow-Alberta Archives holds an unpublished list of 400 towns in which the company actually sold real estate. It also seems probable that the $16 million sales figure does not include Canada North-West Co. sales which were likely higher. Even less is known about the town building activities of the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific Railways.

TABLE I

PRAIRIE PROVINCES 1871-1931; GROWTH OF THE LARGEST METROPOLITAN AREAS

Year	Winnipeg	Calgary	Edmonton	Regina	Saskatoon	Moose Jaw	Brandon	Lethbridge	Medicine Hat	Prince Albert
1871	1,058									
1881	9,286									
1891	27,192	3,876								
1901	44,972	4,392	5,547	2,249	113	1,558	5,620	2,072	1,570	1,785
1906	95,272	13,573	12,717	6,169	3,011	6,249	10,408	2,313	3,020	3,005
1911	144,040	43,704	31,064	30,213	12,004	13,823	13,839	9,035	5,608	6,254
1916	187,251	56,514	53,846	26,127	21,048	16,934	15,215	9,435	9,272	6,436
1921	193,662	63,305	58,821	34,432	25,739	19,285	15,397	11,097	9,634	7,352
1931	243,228	83,761	79,197	53,209	43,291	21,299	17,082	13,489	10,300	9,905

Source: Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 2; Census of Prairie Provinces 1906, Census of Prairie Provinces 1916.

real estate office. Cleverville, Alberta, with a population of about 100, had two offices by 1910.[25] This pattern of town development was usually very rapid, depending always on the rate of farm settlement in the surrounding countryside.[26]

Since the railway companies founded most of the new urban centres, entrepreneurs concentrated almost exclusively on promoting the towns into teeming cities. This penomenon--the rise of the large prairie city--was the most spectacular development of the 1900-1916 period. (See Table I.) The urban population of the prairies increased from 103,000 to 606,000, primarily on the strength of explosive growth in five centres. Calgary leaped from 4,400 to 56,500; Edmonton from 5,500 to 53,800; and Saskatoon from 113 to 21,000. Regina skyrocketed from 2,200 to 30,200 in 1911, and then declined to 26,100 over the next five years. No city, however, paralleled the rise of Winnipeg-St. Boniface. Already a substantial city of 45,000 in 1901, it catapulted to 187,200 over the next 15 years.

The growth of the Western cities was even more remarkable in view of the fact that the period also represented the most rapid advance of rural settlement in Canadian history. But although hundreds of thousands of new settlers flocked to the prairie homesteads, the cities and towns grew even faster. Urban dwellers comprised 25 per cent of the prairie provinces' population in 1901; 35 per cent in 1911. (See Table II.)

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[25] Cleverville Pioneer Club History Book Committee, Cleverville-Champion 1905-1970 (Champion, Alta.: Champion History Committee, 1970), p. 1.

[26] An examination of local history studies reveals a close similarity in the growth patterns of small prairie towns.

The growth of the cities, like that of the towns, was an economic response to massive rural settlement. Just as farmers needed towns, so in turn did towns need cities. Before 1900 when the prairie population was scarcely 400,000 and concentrated in southern Manitoba, there was need for only on large city, but as settlers spread west, the economic need for major transportation centres quickly grew. Central distribution points were necessary to receive large volumes of manufactured goods from the East which could be shipped to the towns in smaller quantities. Grain and cattle returned from the towns and were shipped to market on the transcontinental. These major distribution-shipping points needed a battery of transportation facilities: grain terminals, stockyards, warehouses, wholesale businesses, vast rail yards, roundhouses, and locomotive shops--establishments that formed the nucleus for a prairie city.

Cities were also needed to house industrial activities. Transportation costs to Eastern Canada were so high that it was often profitable to increase the value per unit weight of Western products by reducing their bulkiness--to ship flour and packed meat rather than wheat and cattle.[27] Food processing immediately became an important industry

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[27] New technological developments made these industries feasible for Western manufacturers. The refrigerator car, developed in 1878, meant that slaughtered meat could be shipped East without spoiling. The La Croix purifier, chilled steel rollers, and other technological improvements gave rise to the large centrally located flour mill and eliminated the small local grist mills.

TABLE II

PRAIRIE PROVINCES 1871-1931; RURAL AND URBAN* POPULATION GROWTH

(in thousands)

Year	Northwest Territories				Manitoba		Total Prairies		% Urban
	Rural	Urban			Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
1871	48	=			25	1	72	1	1%
1881	56	=			52	10	108	10	8%
1891	95	4			111	41	206	45	18%
	Alberta		Saskatchewan						
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban					
1901	54	19	77	14	185	70	316	103	25%
1911	237	138	361	131	261	200	859	470	35%
1921	366	223	539	219	349	262	1,253	704	36%
1931	453	279	631	291	384	316	1,468	886	37%

*Incorporated villages, towns, and cities as recorded in Census.

Source: Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 1, Table 7a.

and flour mills, meat packing houses, breweries, distilleries, dairy product factories, and cold storage plants sprang up around major rail centres.

It was also profitable to manufacture certain commodities for the prairie market: simple iron and steel products to supply farmers, blacksmiths, and the railway construction boom. A few sawmills developed in Edmonton, Calgary, and Winnipeg, and farm wagons, furniture, housing fixtures, and other wooden items were produced. Leather was made into harness, and infantile clothing industries developed. Between 1901 and 1911 the value of goods manufactured in Winnipeg rose from $9 million to $39.4 million; in Calgary from $.6 million to $7.8 million; and in Edmonton from $.2 million to $4.5 million.[28]

Armies of construction workers were required to build all these facilities, large banks to finance them, and rising office buildings to manage them. An extensive chain of retail businesses were needed to serve the new inhabitants and the booming frontier city soon became a magnet that drew in teachers, doctors, lawyers, entertainers, barbers, cooks, launderers, policemen, engineers, accountants, prostitutes, saloon keepers, and clergymen. By 1911 the economic functions of the Western city were well defined. At that time approximately 25 per cent of the working people in each of the four largest cities were engaged in professional or service occupations; 20 per cent in trade and merchandising; 20 per cent in building construction; 15 per cent in railway transportation; 15 per cent in manufacturing; and 5 per cent in finance.

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[28] Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 3, Table 11.

Of those engaged in manufacturing, 30 per cent were producing iron and steel products; 25 per cent processed foods; 20 per cent, wooden products; and 10 per cent, textiles and clothing.[29]

By 1916 Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, and Calgary had clearly emerged as the five dominant urban centres, but in 1900 it was not altogether clear which towns would develop into booming cities and which would not. The outcome was largely determined by the foresight, ambition, and promotional skill of each City Council and Board of Trade to attract those facilities most crucial to urban growth.

A transcontinental railway was the first prerequisite for a thriving shipping and distribution point, and the towns along the Canadian Pacific Railway already had this advantage. When the Canadian Northern began to drive to the Pacific in 1902, however, ambitious towns to the north had their chance. Saskatoon jumped at the opportunity. In 1901 it was a sleepy hamlet of 113 people situated on a spur line from Regina. The hinterland supported only a few ranchers. In 1903 a large contingent of English settlers passed through the village and local merchants made a small fortune outfitting the party. With this taste of quick profits they were determined to develop an extensive trade area by attracting the railway.

The Canadian Northern Railway had planned to by-pass the town but by pressuring the company and finally offering $25,000 towards the construction of a railway bridge, Saskatoon was tied into its transcontinental system.[30] Further west, Edmonton merchants had already learned from the Klondike gold rush of 1898 that outfitting pioneers was profitable business. They enticed the railway with 68 acres of free land in return for the line, major yards and shops.[31] In hot pursuit of the Canadian Northern Railway came the Grand Trunk Pacific, Western Canada's third transcontinental, and again Saskatoon was ignored. The local entrepreneurs staged such a protest that the railway finally agreed to connect with the town. Rather than running through its heart as Saskatoon realtors had hoped, the company purchased nearly 1,000 acres to the south, built the transcontinental through it, and offered its own lots for sale.[32] When the company ran a branch line to Regina in 1911 where it was building major shops, it circled the outskirts of that city as well. Edmonton was determined to prevent a similar occurrence and City Council offered the Grand Trunk Pacific $100,000 and tax exemptions if it ran the transcontinental through the city limits, and made Edmonton the major divisional point between Winnipeg and the Pacific.[33]

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[29] Census of Canada 1911, Vol. 6, Table 6.

While the main lines were a crucial step in achieving city stature, they did not guarantee success. To become a major distribution-shipping point, branch lines were needed, important ones, and as many as possible. It was the early realization of this fact that enabled Winnipeg businessmen to transform their town into a metropolis long before 1916. As early as 1880 City Council and the Board of Trade began pestering the Canadian Pacific Railway to run spur lines out of the city and when the company failed to respond quickly enough, Winnipeg entrepreneurs screamed for the removal of its monopoly privileges.[34]

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[30] Men of the city, Narratives of Saskatoon 1882-1912 (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1912), p. 71.

[31] Edmonton Wheat Belt, Information for Intending Settlers (Town of Edmonton pamphlet, 1903), p. 43.

[32] Bruce Peel, The Saskatoon Story (Saskatoon: Pamphlet published by author, 1952), p. 53.

[33] MacGregor, Edmonton, p. 155.

By 1885 steel rails sprang from the city in five directions and connected with every railway in southern Manitoba. As a result, Winnipeg swelled to such an important market in its own right that neither the Canadian Northern nor the Grand Trunk Pacific could afford to by-pass it. As was its custom, however, the late arriving Grand Trunk Pacific avoided high real estate prices by building its yards on the outskirts of the city, giving rise to the town of Transcona in 1908. The Canadian Pacific later established additional yards in the town.

The addition of two new transcontinentals benefitted Winnipeg immensely. By 1916 tracks entered the city from 15 directions;[35] every line of steel between Eastern and Western Canada passed through the city, and this fact alone ensured its rise as the metropolitan capital of the prairie provinces. Its sprawling rail yards were the largest in Canada and in 1909 Winnipeg handled more grain than any city in the world.[36]

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[34] Careless, "Winnipeg," p. 252.

[35] This and subsequent information on numbers of branch lines are taken from M. L. Bladen, "Construction of Railways in Canada to the Year 1885," Contributions to Canadian Economics, Vol. 5 (1932); and M. L. Bladen, "Construction of Railways in Canada, Part II, From 1885 to 1931," Contributions to Canadian Economics, Vol. 7 (1934).

[36] "Winnipeg, the Gateway of the Canadian West," Canadian Annual Review (1912), p. 79.

Its wholesalers were the largest in Western Canada. It became the regional head office for nearly all Eastern based firms. Neighbouring St. Boniface was moulded into an industrial suburb where giant flour mills, meat packing plants, and other industries crowded against knots of converging rail lines. By 1911 Winnipeg was the fourth largest manufacturing city in the nation, accounting for half of the entire prairie output.[37] Between 1900 and 1912 building permits rose in value from $1.4 million to $20.5 million; bank clearings from $.1 billion to $1.5 billion.[38] Winnipeg, Canada's third largest city, owed most of this economic growth to its strategic rail connections.

Further west, a multitude of towns battled for the new branch lines that were spreading everywhere, tempting the railway companies with promises of free land, money, or tax exemptions. Those that were most successful duplicated Winnipeg's economic development on a smaller scale. Edmonton acquired several lines between 1905 and 1910, and the Board of Trade happily announced that during the same period the annual trade value of the hinterland had spiralled from $3 million to $20 million.[39] By 1916 Edmonton flexed 11 steel tentacles into the arable parklands of northern Alberta. Saskatoon, led by Allan Bowerman, who was rapidly accumulating a million dollars in city real estate, fought for and acquired seven rail connections into the hinterland, and emerged as the trade capital of northern Saskatchewan. Although railways left Regina for eight different points, the city faced stiff competition from nearby Moose Jaw. Its early establishment as a major Canadian Pacific Railway divisional point allowed it to centre for seven lines. Stealing what Reginans regarded as their rightful population, Moose Jaw soared from 1,600 people in 1901 to 17,000 in 1916. Calgary's rail lines were extremely important if few in number, and it became Canadian Pacific's major rail centre between Winnipeg and the Pacific, a position greatly enhanced by the construction of the huge Ogden Shops in 1912.

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[37] Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 3, Table 11.

[38] "Winnipeg, the Gateway," pp. 78 and 82.

[39] Canadian Annual Review (1910), p. 570.

Railways could offer cities more than branch lines. Calgary became the headquarters for the Canadian Pacific Railway's irrigation projects in 1895 and, in 1912, the head office of its Department of Natural Resources.[40] Special freight rates were another eagerly sought advantage. Regina, for example, secured rates in 1902 which made it cheaper to ship Ontario built farm machinery to a village in southern Saskatchewan via the city instead of directly to the village.[41] Winnipeg's ability to secure lower freight rates than any prairie city helped her wholesalers to compete successfully throughout the West.

The cities were not merely content to let their multiplying rail lines serve as natural lures for new industries; they fought for them by offering economic incentives to intending manufacturers. Calgary tempted them with ten-year tax exemptions and cheap land--$200 to $800 an acre.[42] Saskatoon tried to provide cheap labour. City Council offered to buy a large block of land for an Industrial Park that would give free lots to manufacturers. Commissioner Bell of the Industrial League planned to provide the necessary labour by building a suburb for Slavic immigrants and he actually formed a company called Toil Corporation Limited.[43] Other cities created promotional organizations. In 1906 the Winnipeg Development and Industrial Bureau was formed to attract manufacturers, and by 1914 it had gobbled up $112,000 of municipal subsidies in the attempt.[44] Nor was the campaign for industry restricted to the larger centres. "Far-Famed" Broadview, Saskatchewan--population 700--also offered economic incentives to industry.[45]

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[40] Included under the Department were farm lands, coal, timber, oil, natural gas, and irrigation. The Canadian Pacific Railway land office at Calgary was the most important one in Western Canada.

[41] Drake, Regina, p. 111.

Energy was crucial to these industry-hungry towns, and Boards of Trade followed the expansion of local reserves with sharp eyes. When the City of Winnipeg initiated public ownership of electricity in 1906, it did so at the urging of the Board of Trade which wanted to control a cheap source of power for manufacturers.[46] Other cities took similar action.

Much of the campaign to win settlers and industries was waged in the great propaganda war. Pamphlets were a relatively inexpensive means of advertising and hundreds of prairie towns bombarded North Americans with the printed word. In 1906 the Calgary Board of Trade asked City Council for $15,000 to spend on advertising and the following year it churned out 24,000 pamphlets.[47] Regina created a Publicity Commission and Saskatoon appointed a full-time commissioner to advertise the city. Between 1907 and 1910 Winnipeg's Industrial Bureau assaulted the reading public with two million pieces of printed material.[48] That city was soon publishing a periodical entitled The Emigrant in order to lure new residents.

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[42] Calgary, Alberta, The Manufacturing, Jobbing and Commercial Center of the Canadian West (City of Calgary pamphlet, 1911), p. 18.

[43] Peel, Saskatoon, pp. 74-5.

[44] Alan F. J. Artibise, "Advertising Winnipeg: The Campaign for Immigrants and Industry, 1874-1914," Papers Read Before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series 3, No. 27 (1970-71), pp. 98-99.

[45] All About Far-Famed Broadview, Saskatchewan (Board of Trade pamphlet, 1911), p. 6.

[46] Canadian Annual Review (1905), p. 190.

Each pamphlet extolled its city's virtues and discredited all rivals. There was Calgary, "the most prosperous and fastest growing city in the world"; Winnipeg, "the Chicago of Canada"; Lethbridge, "the great manufacturing centre"; Alix, "the rail transportation capital of the West"; and a hundred others. Champion, Alberta, declared that "of all the thriving towns . . . destined to become industrial centres of the future, none [had] grown to such importance, in so brief a time, as Champion."[49] Its population at the time was less than 400.

To attract farmers to the hinterland, towns made absurd claims, often suggesting that their soil would produce 50 to 100 bushels of wheat per acre annually. In an attempt to attract livestock-raisers to the foothills, one Calgary pamphlet printed a picture of grazing animals with a caption reading "Happy Alberta Horses."[50] Agricultural fairs were started to advertise the productivity of local farmlands. Winnipeg's Western Canada Immigration Association provided free tours of the prairies for editors of farm magazines and foreign colonization agents. Small towns dropped bundles of pamphlets in city train stations. The pamphlets issued by the small towns urged farmers to settle in the immediate vicinity, while those originating in the large branch line centres like Edmonton or Regina called for pioneers to settle anywhere within a one-hundred mile radius. Winnipeg, with its vast economic influence, often advertised farm land all across the West.

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[47] Canadian Annual Review (1906), p. 268; and (1908), p. 147.

[48] Artibise, "Advertising," p. 99.

[49] Grain Golden Champion, Alberta, Canada (Board of Trade pamphlet, 1913), p. 1.

After convincing the reader that its city was destined to become one of the largest farming, rail, jobbing, and maufacturing centres in Canada, the pamphlet usually drew attention to such intangible benefits as scenic streets, a balmy climate, healthy drinking water, friendly citizens, and a high standard of morality. Brandon was "the most beautiful city in Western Canada," while in Regina "no sphere of development had progressed more rapidly than the advancement of religious thought and activity."[51] In bold type Saskatoon assured intending residents that it had "no old inhabitants to hinder progress,"[52] and Moose Jaw promised newcomers an aggressive city council "composed of live wires."[53]

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[50] Calgary, Alberta; The Land of Plenty (City of Calgary and Board of Trade pamphlet, 1907), p. 25.

[51] Regina, The Capital of Saskatchewan (Board of Trade pamphlet, 1906), p. 5.

[52] Saskatoon (Board of Trade pamphlet, 1913), p. 2.

Real estate speculators also did much to advertise the urban prairies; they were often the most enthusiastic supporters of town promotion as well as its greatest beneficiaries. Downtown lots available in 1900 for less than $1,000 were sold ten years later for $40,000 to $200,000. Pat Burns sold a 320 acre parcel of land on the edge of Calgary for $500,000.[54] In 1912 the speculative fever reached epidemic proportions. In three inch type, newspaper advertisements shrieked their message with excited urgency:

> Buy Immediately . . . Don't wait to buy real estate, buy now and then wait . . . Rare Opportunity of a Life Time - Buy Now . . . Values sure to double . . . Going Like Hot Cakes . . . Values five to ten Times Present Prices . . . Buy at Once . . .

All three railway companies promoted their town lots and often ran five full pages of advertisements per day in the larger newspapers. Realtors advertised towns both large and small. Plans for an irrigation dam at Bassano, Alberta, resulted in a massive campaign to sell real estate. "The best buy by a dam site," cried the promoters, "scores of industrial projects are now in the embryo." "One of the most attractive investment opportunities ever offered in the West . . . predicted 1915 population - 15,000."[55] Unlike others, this campaign failed miserably, for by 1921 Bassano's population was 800 and declining steadily.

Outside the emerging cities contractors threw up scores of new suburbs. In Winnipeg communities such as St. James, St. Vital, Tuxedo, Fort Garry, and East Kildonan rose from the prairie to house thousands of people. The suburban boom fired the imagination of real estate speculators. Belgravia and Mayfair, properties advertised as suburbs of Regina, were actually vacant farms miles from the city.[56] Even small towns were selling suburban lots to unsuspecting buyers in the distant East.

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[53] Real estate advertisement, Calgary Herald, Mar. 9, 1912, p. 26.

[54] Calgary Herald, Mar. 30, 1912, p. 1.

[55] Advertisement, Calgary Herald, Mar. 23, 1912, p. 1.

The Hudson's Bay Company land sale in Edmonton was a prime example of the powerful grip that real estate speculation held over the minds of urban pioneers. Contrary to the impression conveyed by many historians, the Hudson's Bay Company did not disappear with the fur trade. It constructed mammoth department stores all across the West and established a retail business that shamed the old fur trade by comparison. The company was also a mighty town promoter, playing a decisive role in Winnipeg's early acquisition of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1882 its Fort Edmonton property amounted to 3,000 acres and in 1912 it decided to sell the large portion that remained. A blistering campaign was launched--it was so successful that buyers began lining up the day before the sale opened. In fairness to all, the company drew names from a barrel to determine the order in which buyers could select their lots. George Kettyls, whose name was drawn early, was offered $130 for his place in line.[57]

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[56] Canadian Annual Review (1912), p. 625.

[57] John G. Niddrie, "The Edmonton Boom of 1911-12," Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 13, No 2 (Spring, 1965), p. 4.

Real estate profit was one reason why urban centres competed for government institutions. Construction contracts, a civil service that consumed goods, and added prestige were others. As early as 1887 Calgary proposed that the capital of the North West Territories alternate between itself and Regina,[58] and in 1895 the city issued a pamphlet with the suggestive title of Calgary, the Denver of Canada; its Adaptability as a Health Resort and as a Site for the Dominion Sanatorium for the Treatment of Consumption.[59] In 1905 when it was known that the province of Alberta would be created, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Lacombe, Banff, and other towns locked horns to secure the prize of capital city. Petitions and delegations sped quickly to Ottawa where the principal contenders presented their case. The arguments in favour of each site grew wilder and wilder--it was even suggested that in the event of foreign invasion, only Banff in its mountain fortress would be a safe and logical location for the capital.[60]

Through the daily press, Calgary and Edmonton blasted each other with derogatory statements. Unfortunately for Calgary, her M.P. in Ottawa sat with the Conservative opposition while Frank Oliver of Edmonton was a government cabinet minister. By curious coicidence Edmonton was selected for the capital, pending ratification by the new Alberta government. The Premier, A. C. Rutherford, also happened to represent

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[58] Calgary Tribune, Dec. 10, 1887. The city applied to Ottawa for approval.

[59] (City Council pamphlet, 1895).

[60] MacEwan, Calgary, p. 130.

Edmonton (Strathcona) and the choice was confirmed. In 1907 the Premier abruptly announced that the University of Alberta would be built in his home town and Calgarians were left with nothing but steaming indignation.

In the new province of Saskatchewan, Regina already had the necessary government buildings and it retained the capital without much difficulty, though various attempts were made by Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon to steal it away. The provincial university site was more hotly debated. Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Regina, Moose Jaw, and even Indian Head--population 1,300--entered the contest. In 1907 a Board of Governors was appointed with powers to select the site and after much wining and dining as guests of the various cities, narrowed their choice to Regina and Saskatoon. The capital quickly offered 640 acres of free land and a "strong moral atmosphere." Saskatoon offered nothing but, oddly enough, a member of the Board from the southern part of the province defected to the northern cause and his vote tipped the decision in favour of Saskatoon.[61]

Winnipeg, which had been the confirmed capital since 1870, so dominated other urban centres in Manitoba that it encountered no difficulty in securing the provincial university. Its ambitions were national in scope and the political favours it wanted could only be granted by Ottawa. But although its Board of Trade fought hard for the transfer of Western natural resources to provincial control, for reduced tariffs, lower freight rates, and other advantages that would stimulate Winnipeg's growth, the city was largely unsuccessful in realizing its objectives, primarily because they ran counter to the wishes of powerful business elites in Toronto and Montreal. Winnipeg's greatest political triumph probably came in 1890 when it pressured the federal government to give Western boards the sole right to set grain standards. This right stimulated local grain trading and more wheat was soon bought and sold on the floor of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange than anywhere else in the world. In turn, the Exchange spawned the large trading, brokerage, and financial firms that contributed significantly to Winnipeg's wealth and growth.

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[61] For detail see Jean E. Murray, "The Contest for the University of Saskatchewan," Saskatchewan History, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter, 1959).

Although government institutions and political favours helped spark the growth of prairie cities, other promotional activities proved wasteful. Pamphleteering and real estate advertising, for example, lured many new residents, but they quickly left when solid economic development failed to materialize. Many towns actually lost population between 1911 and 1921 as a result of overspeculation.[62] The campaign for settlers often brought farmers to some towns earlier than to less advertised regions, but the long range effects were negligible. Pioneers eventually settled in all arable regions and their numbers were determined solely by the ability of the land to support them. Successful efforts to attract rail lines always brought the most beneficial results. Whenever a new line thrust into the hinterland, it generated a new cycle of growth in trade, industry, and construction. And each new line, depending on its importance, had a more dramatic effect than its predecessor; multiplying rail constructions made the town attractive to larger and more specialized businesses. Economic incentives probably attracted industry only if good transportation facilities were already established.

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[62] Although Census records show a steady increase in the populations of Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg between 1911 and 1916, there is some evidence to suggest that these cities may have lost population between 1913 and 1916 as a result of overspeculation. The Census records a population loss for Regina between 1911 and 1916.

The tendency for large towns to get larger was also related to the fact that the largest centres could raise the most money to spend luring railroads, industries, and government institutions. In Saskatchewan this advantage could be enhanced by the political status of the municipality. An incorporated village could borrow up to 5 per cent of its assessed property value and when its population reached 500 it could become a town and borrow up to 10 per cent; as a city, requiring a population of 5,000, it could borrow up to 20 per cent. To obtain more promotional money, Saskatoon changed its status as quickly as population growth permitted: it became a village in 1901, a town in 1903, and a city in 1906.[63] In some cases, however, rapid change in municipal status simply encouraged many towns to go bankrupt by overspending, with the result that they were later forced to revert to a lesser status.

Nonetheless, optimism remained high and entrepreneurs everywhere believed that the urban boom would last indefinitely. A 1911 prediction placed Winnipeg's population at one million within ten years.[64] The Greater Regina Club hoped to promote the city to a population of 50,000,[65] and in 1907 Calgary's Hundred Thousand Club predicted that its objective would be reached "within a few years."[66] Soon after, the organization changed its name to the Quarter Million Club, and many small towns organized local Ten Thousand Clubs.

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[63] Peel, Saskatoon, p. 43.

[64] Manitoba Free Press, Jan. 14, 1911.

[65] Canadian Annual Review (1909), p. 334.

Although many of these predictions began as real estate gimmicks, the town promoters soon believed their own propaganda. In Winnipeg, for example, City Council began planning in 1906 for a population of 450,000 by 1921.[67] In 1914 a Calgary City Planning Commission report made a startling prediction: the city would have a population of 500,000 within a generation. As a result of irrigation, farming would intensify, industries would rise, and the population of the immediate hinterland would exceed 3,000,000.[68] The report, fully illustrated, envisioned spacious town squares where great cultural, public, and financial institutions would rise to challenge the architectual beauty of any city in Europe. Gracefully curved streets lined with stately homes would radiate from each public square.

Unfortunately for the town promoters, the plans of Calgary and other cities were based on the false assumption that the growth rate of the 1900-1912 period would continue forever. As in 1882, a collapse in real estate prices signalled the end of the boom. Disaster struck in

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[66] E. L. Richardson, Calgary, Alberta, Commercial Metropolis of Western Canada (Calgary: Hundred Thousand Club pamphlet, 1907), back cover.

[67] Morton, Manitoba, p. 308.

[68] Thomas H. Mawson and Sons, City Planning Experts, The City of Calgary, Past, Present, and Future (Calgary: City Planning Commission of Calgary, 1914), pp. 12-14.

1913. In Regina, where a tornado had devastated much of the city in 1912, the blow was particularly severe and the population declined by 4,000 over the next three years. Elsewhere, the urban growth rate slowed significantly and many years passed before the value of real estate and building permits returned to 1912 levels. The more serious problem, again as in 1882, was that farm population growth was beginning to level off.

Before 1914, cities grew explosively because pioneers and townsmen needed huge qualities of goods to build their farms and businesses. Once established, however, less economic growth was necessary to maintain them. And by the end of the Great War the settlement of the West was largely an accomplished fact. Cities continued to grow, but no faster than the rural population: between 1921 and 1931 the farm population of the prairie provinces increased from 1,253,000 to only 1,468,000; in 1911 urban dwellers accounted for 35 per cent of the population and in 1931 for only 37 per cent.

Urban development was linked inseparably to agriculture and little else. The natural resources of the prairie, though great, were few in number. Most of its petroleum remained undiscovered until the late 1940's and its coal did not require a huge population to extract. The soil was the only great natural resource that was fully exploited during this period. It was difficult for Western cities to develop any further as industrial centres. Because of a small local market, it was profitable to manufacture only commodities that were cheap and bulky or required little capital investment. Because of high transportation costs, prairie cities could only penetrate the eastern market by processing bulky food products. It was more profitable for manufacturers to locate in Eastern Canada where mineral resources, cheap power, labour, and water for industry and transportation were more abundant; and where accessible markets were larger.[69] As a result, the Western cities grew slowly after 1921, functioning almost exclusively as agricultural service centres.

By that year, powerful geographic forces had arranged prairie urban centres into a distinctive pattern. The very creation of major distribution-shipping points dictated that only a small number of them emerge and that they be separated by long distance. By 1921 only Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, and Calgary had populations in excess of 25,000 and the five cities were located across the prairie region in a remarkably even pattern.

Equally important in determining the distribution of urban places was the relationship between transportation time and the frequency of need for various goods and services. The rural pioneer travelled by team and wagon, and because he spent much of late fall and winter hauling grain to the railway, it was highly advantageous to settle within ten miles of a shipping point. Distances beyond about ten miles were too far to travel on a regular basis so the shipping point developed into a town that provided frequently needed goods and services. Its population depended on the density of rural settlement--about 700 to 1,400 farm families within a ten-mile radius[70]--but usually ranged from 100 to 1,000. Where attempts were made by railway companies to establish several towns within ten miles of each other, one usually emerged dominant while the others remained mere elevator sidings, often without a general store, and in most cases, with populations of less than 50. Consequently, by 1921 over 900 towns with populations exceeding 100 had developed, 90 per cent of them having less than 1,000 inhabitants. (See Table III.) Separated by distances of ten to twenty miles and strung together by railway lines, their distribution across the prairies was relatively even because farm population distribution was relatively even. The town pattern was somewhat denser in the parkland belt from Winnipeg to Edmonton where higher rainfall permitted more intensive farming, and thinned gradually towards the arid plain along the southern Alberta-Saskatchewan border.

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[69] The problem was augmented by discriminatory freight rates which always favoured Eastern manufacturers. Although Winnipeg attempted to manufacture a wide variety of products, high transportation costs prohibited nationwide marketing. The opening of the Panama Canal led to the rise of Vancouver as a grain shipping point and Winnipeg lost its monopoly on that function as well.

Towns with populations exceeding 1,000 provided a greater range of goods and services than the villages. Swift Current, Saskatchewan, with a population of about 2,000 in 1914, offered doctors, a hospital, lawyers, insurance companies, a court house and jail, furniture stores, and a Mounted Police station besides fulfilling all the functions of a village. But because farmers and villagers did not need these additional services regularly, only 67 towns with populations over 1,000 developed. They were separated by distances of forty to eighty miles and railways provided the only feasible means of transportation for many hinterland

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[70] Based on the estimate of two to four farms per section during the settlement period.

TABLE III

PRAIRIE PROVINCES 1871-1931; GROWTH OF THE NUMBER OF URBAN PLACES

		1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Number of towns with populations exceeding...	100	2*	20*	70*	160*	590*	920*	1,010*
	1,000	1	4*	10	17	49	67	82
	2,500		1	4	5	13	20	22
	5,000		1	1	2	11	12	16
	10,000			1	1	7	8	9
	25,000			1	1	4	5	5
	50,000					1	3	4

*Estimated. Census is reliable for Alberta and Saskatchewan where almost every town over 100 population became incorporated. In Manitoba towns under 500 were not allowed to incorporate and do not appear in Census. 1881 is most difficult to estimate. Estimates are based on Census, old maps, and printed sources. All other figures based on Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 2, Tables 8-12.

Note: Manitoba, which was settled first, accounted for over half of all urban places up to 1901. By 1921 Saskatchewan, with the largest area of farm land, accounted for nearly half.

residents to travel to and from them.[71] Centres over 2,500 where the services were even more specialized and infrequently needed, numbered only 20 and were seventy to one hundred miles apart.

Cities over 5,000 became branch line centres where wholesale trading and industry accounted more for their size than specialized retail functions. Only 12 cities of this size developed. The largest five--Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, and Calgary--were separated by distances of 200 to 500 miles. They carved the prairie region into five roughly equal parts and controlled the commercial activity within their domains so effectively that small cities could only emerge by tapping a portion of the trade half-way between them. Moose Jaw was an exception, rising to prominence on Regina's doorstep as a result of the early Canadian Pacific Railway divisional move; but Brandon, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Prince Albert all owed their position as small cities to the fact that they were far removed from larger competitors. At the apex of the urban hierarchy stood Winnipeg, the only city with a population exceeding 150,000. From its commanding position at the narrow gate where the Shield gives way abruptly to fertile prairie, it was able to intercept all transcontinental traffic, the most important factor in its rise to metropolitan stature.

Although the size, number, and distribution of urban places developed in response to the economic geography of the hinterland, the role of town promotion was by no means negated. A similar pattern could have easily emerged with the various towns simply exchanging economic functions and population sizes. Selkirk, for example, might well have become the gateway to the West and Winnipeg a prairie village. It would, in fact, have been a better location for a large city as river flooding is less serious at Selkirk than at Winnipeg. The exact geographic location of the larger cities played almost no role in determining their growth. Although most cities were located on major rivers, Regina rose to the largest centre in Saskatchewan from the banks of tiny Wascana Creek. At Edmonton the river banks were too steep and transportation between the north and south sectors of the city was, and remains, a major problem. Town location and growth depended far more on railways, and across the flat treeless prairie, railways ran with arbitrary will. Operating within the broad limits set by the economic geography of the Western prairies, it was the activities of railway companies and town promoters that determined the location and growth of the larger urban places.[72]

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[71] Increased use of the automobile after 1921 increased the frequency of visits to these towns at the expense of smaller ones. For more detail on the changing urban pattern of small places in the 1930's and 1940's see Charles C. Zimmerman and Garry Moneo, "The Total Community of the Canadian Wheat Prairies," Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1970).

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[72] Several themes in this chapter have earlier been explored for the settlement of the American West. In particular see Wyatt W. Belcher, *The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850-1880* (New York: 1947); A. Theodore Brown, *Frontier City: A istory of Kansas City to 1870* (Columbia, Mo.: 1964); Charles N. Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads* (Madison, Wisc.: 1962).

CHAPTER IV

THE FRONTIER BUSINESSMAN: A CASE STUDY OF CALGARY ENTREPRENEURS

Little of the enormous wealth that was reaped from the settlement of the prairies went to the pioneer farmer. While he might argue that the lion's share was plucked from his pocket by Eastern capitalists, much of it also went to pioneer businessmen in the emerging Western cities.

Much evidence of wealth could certainly be seen in Calgary by the boom year of 1912. A visitor then might marvel at activity in the business district where buggies, streetcars, and automobiles battled pedestrians for possession of the narrow streets. Office buildings, banks, and shops all teemed with busy customers. Advertisements glared from the windows of countless real estate firms. A frantic construction boom swallowed up wagon-loads of building materials, and the racket of workmen and tools filled the air. To the south, wholesale houses nestled against narrow railway sidings. To the east, the landscape was cluttered by flour mills, meatpacking plants,breweries, sprawling stockyards, and railyards. A stroll along 12 and 13 Avenues South revealed the benificiaries of this wealth. No eye could miss the castle-like mansions of this neighbourhood, while further south, a battery of ornate homes studded the Mount Royal hillside.

Thirty years earlier, on the eve of the Canadian Pacific Railway's entry into Calgary, the scene was different. Calgary was a rough outpost and her men of wealth had little money. In fact, early business activity was monopolized by outsiders; Calgary's very creation in 1875 was the outcome of Ottawa's decision to build police forts in the West. The Hudson's Bay Company and I. G. Baker, a wily trader based in Fort

Benton, Montana, foresaw that the Mounties and any who followed them would need supplies. The two companies quickly established trading posts. For years Baker's plodding oxen provided the only freight transportation in the region. After 1875 a few shacks were added to the settlement--nothing more.

The arrival of the transcontinental railway in 1883 injected vitality into the community. Between then and 1914, three types of businessmen invaded the city: the salaried managers of Eastern-based firms, the small retail merchants, and the more ambitious wholesalers, real estate developers, and manufacturers. It was the latter group, the entrepreneurs, that dominated local business and garnered most of its profits. Their rise from modest means to great wealth, power, and status owed much to the settlement of the agricultural frontier around them, and the newness of both their fortunes and their community pervaded their way of life.

An intimate relationship was reflected in the population growth of city and hinterland. The flow of settlers into southern Alberta was a mere trickle before the turn of the century--then the floodgates burst:[1]

	Southern Alberta (Census Divisions 1-9)	Calgary	Calgary's percentage of the total
1883	-	400	-
1901	42,500	4,400	10 per cent
1916	317,000	56,500	18 per cent

Although few fortunes were harvested before 1900, the seeds of several were planted. In spite of its tiny size, Calgary was still the largest and most important business centre west of Winnipeg, and the town prospered by fulfilling the needs of its hinterland. First, it was a transportation centre. Western grain and cattle were shipped East; manufactured goods were distributed to the countryside. Hence it was also a wholesale centre where bulk quantities of lumber and Eastern-made farm machinery, hardwares, foodstuffs, and clothing were parcelled out to the rising prairie villages for retail. It was a manufacturing centre that produced some of these goods and processed the agricultural products of the region. Finally, it was a financial centre that extended credit to homesteaders and small-town merchants.

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[1] Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 2, Table 8; Census of the Prairie Provinces 1916.

Ambitious men rushed to the city to tap these sources of wealth. They were often elbowed aside by established eastern companies. Profits in transportation were siphoned away by the Canadian Pacific Railway. The most important reason why Calgary emerged as the commercial capital of southern Alberta was simply because the company wished it. Wherever the C.P.R. planted a divisional point, the germ of a prairie city formed. Nourished by low freight rates, it would sprout branch lines into the hinterland. These decisions were subject to C.P.R. whims and they had been made for Calgary. In 1891 steel rails sprang north to Edmonton, and a year later, south to Fort MacLeod. In 1898 the company confirmed Calgary's role as chief rail centre between Winnipeg and the Pacific by constructing major repair shops.

The building of major financial institutions was also beyond the resources and abilities of local entrepreneurs. Struggling to wring wealth from virgin lands, frontier communities spawned by the railways begged for capital and then staggered under the weight of debt.[2] They seldom accumulated enough money to start local banking. Two gentlemen named Lafferty and Smith established a bank in Calgary in 1882,[3] but it was not successful and eastern Banks such as the Bank of Montreal and the Bank of Commerce soon dominated local financing.

Even in wholesaling, local men sometimes faced sharp competition from Eastern or Winnipeg-based jobbing houses. But many survived. G. C. King left the employ of the I. G. Baker Company in 1882 to start his own store. He was soon joined by I. S. Freeze and Arthur L. Cameron in general supplies, W. H. Kinnisten in groceries, John Field in chemicals and drugs, Robert J. Hutchings and George Murdock in harness and saddles, and Edwin Rodgers in hardwares. These early merchants were both retailers and wholesalers; the two functions gradually split when a broadening market began to encourage specialization.

The most successful entrepreneurs of late nineteenth-century Calgary were the manufacturers. Some processed prairie agricultural products. Donald McLean built a flour mill in 1893. A. E. Cross, a man destined to become much more important in the business affairs of Calgary, made beer. The son of a prominent Montreal jurist, he came to Alberta in 1884 to work as a veterinarian and bookkeeper for Senator

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[2] Overland transportation costs were so high before the railway age that many frontier communities developed their own goods and services free from outside interference. Low cost rail transportation often destroyed local industry by making the cost of Eastern goods and services competitive.

[3] The New West (Winnipeg: Canadian Historical Publishing Company, 1888), p. 13.

Cochrane's horse ranch. But Cross wanted a spread of his own and soon quit the job. In time, four huge ranches would sprawl over tens of thousands of acres.[4] Visiting his native city, he was intrigued by operations at the Montreal Brewing Company. He rushed back West in 1892 and launched the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company. That year a dozen employees churned out 10,000 barrels of beer.[5] In 1894 he organized Calgary Beverage Ltd., a subsiduary that manufactured soft drinks. By 1901 the capitalization of the brewery stood at $200,000 and the annual value of its products at $35,750. Employees numbered 34.[6] To guarantee a market for his beer, Cross started buying hotels throughout the West.[7]

William Roper Hull was a meat packer. He was only 17 when he and his brother left England in 1873. They sailed round the Cape Horn to the west coast, trudged inlandto Kamloops, and started ranching. A slaughtering business began in 1883 when they agreed to supply beef to all the C.P.R. construction gangs in British Columbia. An occassional supplier of horses to Alberta, Hull started a ranching and meat business near Calgary in 1886.

As a meat packer, he was no match for Pat Burns. The Ontario

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[4] The Western Stockman, Mar. 26, 1932.

[5] The Calgary Brewing and Malting Company (Calgary Brewing and Malting Co.: undated pamphlet, Glenbow-Alberta Archives).

[6] Census manuscript 1901, Calgary Brewing and Malting Company Papers, Glenbow-Alberta Archives.

[7] During prohibition (1915-1924) Cross was able to buy 50 hotels at bargain rates. Catherine Philip, "The Crosses of Alberta," Part Three, Chatelaine Magazine (Aug., 1965), pp. 61-2.

Irishman was penniless when he arrived in Manitoba in 1878. To raise cash for his homestead, he worked as a railway labourer, but soon turned to buying and selling cattle. He was the first to ship livestock to Eastern markets.[8] Finding the business lucrative, he pursued it further in Winnipeg and like Hull, was soon supplying meat for railway gangs. This enterprise brought him to Calgary in 1890 where construction had started on the Calgary and Edmonton Railway. When fire destroyed his slaughter house in 1892, he built a larger one. He won contracts to supply meat to the Blood Indian Reserve and to lumber, railway, and mining camps in the Kootenay region of British Columbia. He built 16 retail meat stores there.[9]

Burns was dressing 600 head a month when the Yukon gold rush started.[10] He guessed that rich claim owners would pay a fortune for beef, but the problem of delivery was staggering. He sent live cattle to the coast by rail, shipped them north to Skagway, and drove them over the coastal mountains. They were slaughtered and floated into Dawson City by raft.[11] The profits were ploughed back into the business. In 1902 Burns bought a ranch, slaughter house, business block, and several retail meat stores owned by Hull.

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[8] The Albertan, Feb. 25, 1937.

[9] Albert Frederick Sproule, "The Role of Patrick Burns in the Development of Western Canada" (unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of Alberta, 1962), p. 74.

[10] C. I. Ritchie, "Nation Builder," Canadian Cattlemen, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Dec., 1940), p. 484.

[11] Grant MacEwan, Blazing the Old Cattle Trail (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1962), pp. 181-5.

McLean, Cross, and Burns started processing food at a time when new railways were flexing north and south of the city. Others attempted to manufacture durable goods that could be marketed along those lines at a cost low enough to compete with Easterners. Most failed. Discriminatory freight rates and an abundant supply of capital, labour, power, and markets favoured the growth of secondary manufacturing in the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes region. Western manufacturers could only compete, even in their own regional market, by concentrating on products requiring little capital or technical expertise, goods that were too bulky in relation to their value to justify the cost of importing them from the East.

Sporadic efforts to manufacture leathergoods and simple hardwares bore some fruit, but most of the durable goods produced in Calgary before 1900 were made of wood. Lumber was a precious commodity on the treeless plains and W. H. Cushing knew it. A builder by trade, he opened a mill in 1885. Its 15 employees made not only lumber but sashes and doors.[12] It was soon common for pioneers to build homes and barns out of prefabricated materials.

Sharp competition came from I. K. Kerr and Peter Prince, two Eastern Canadians who emerged from the Wisconsin forests armed with capital and experience. They started the Eau Claire and Bow River Lumber Company in 1883, and three years later, opened a mill manned by 75 employees.[13] Logs from the foothills sailed down the river in summer and were processed in winter. The partners figured that excess power generated by their electrical plant could be used to generate extra money as well. In 1889 they secured a franchise from the city to supply street lighting and the Calgary Water Power Company was born. Ingeniously, they burned sawdust to produce electricity; it ran the mill by day and lit the city by night.[14] Responding to increased demands for power in 1893, Prince and Kerr built the Hillhurst dam and installed two water wheels.

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[12] The Albertan, The 100,000 Manufacturing, Building, and Wholesale Book Edition of the Morning Albertan (Calgary: The Albertan, 1914), p. 36.

[13] Ibid.

Through lack of capital, markets, or expertise, many early manufacturing projects in Calgary fizzled. In 1891 factories numbered 28; by 1901, only 10. These failures served to strengthen the companies that survived. Whereas the average factory in 1891 employed only six men, it employed 31 a decade later. A wildly expanding market between 1900 and 1915 boosted the number of factories to 69 and the average number of employees to 44. In the same period, capital invested in factories swelled from $.4 million to $14.5 million, and the annual value of output from $.6 million to $11.1 million, highest on the prairies after Winnipeg.[15] These figures also reveal that increasingly it took more capital to produce a dollar's worth of goods. The upshot was that manufacturers well established prior to 1900 were better able to glean profits from the new market. Using labour strength as a yardstick of growth, Cushing Brothers Ltd. employed 225 men by 1914; the

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[14] Theodore Strom, "With the Eau Claire in Calgary," Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer, 1964), p. 4.

[15] All figures from Census of Canada 1911, Vol. 3, Table 11; Census of Manufacturing 1961, Table 11.

Eau Claire company, 206; P. Burns Company, 350; and Cross' brewery, 142--all far above the city average for factories.[16]

These figures only hint at the rampant pace of expansion, which was generally characterized by the introduction of new or related products, by the establishment of branch plants in other cities, and by the vertical integration of industrial activities. Two examples illustrate these developments. Between 1905 and 1910 the capital invested in the Cushing plant soared from $20,000 to $500,000.[17] He acquired timber rights in British Columbia. He built a new mill in Calgary in 1908; branch factories cropped up in Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Regina. Retail outlets dotted the province. A wider range of building materials were offered for sale. By 1910, 400 doors alone tumbled from the home factory each day.[18]

No one expanded faster than Pat Burn. His plan was to build a fully integrated meat industry. Phase one: ranching. He aquired 12 huge spreads,[19] which, at their peak in 1917, contained 450,000 acres.[20] He bred cattle, fattened them, slaughtered them. The Calgary plant was enlarged and modernized in 1906. When it burned down in 1913, it was said that Burns gave the command to build a larger one before the flames had died.[21] He processed every kind of domestic animal and sold hides, fertilizer, and lard as by-products. He bought out rivals across the West and built backing plants in six other cities.[22] Dressed meats went to Burns' cold storage warehouses and from there to his retail meat stores. He owned 76 by 1911, over 100 soon after. He bought 65 cheese factories and dairies (Palm Dairies Ltd.) and sold butter, cheese, eggs. milk, and ice cream. He added 18 wholsesale fruit and vegetable outlets to his empire.[23] One of the few prairie manufacturers to crack world markets, Burns opened offices in London, Liverpool, Paris, and Yokohama to market his exports.

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[16] The Albertan, 100,000, p. 36.

[17] Archibald Oswald MacRae, History of the Province of Alberta, Vol. 2 (Calgary: Western Canada History Co., 1912), p. 621.

[18] Calgary Daily Herald, Why Go to Canada (Calgary: Calgary Daily Herald, 1910), p. 15.

[19] Henry James Morgan, ed., The Canadian Men and Women of the Time (second ed.; Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), p. 175.

[20] Sproule, Burns, p. 188.

Some of Calgary's earliest manufacturers became the city's richest citizens in the new century. So did a few newcomers. Many factories built after 1900 were simply Eastern branch plants, but some sprang fresh from entrepreneurial initiative, particularly lumber mills. W. A. MacKinnon arrived in 1905 and started the Western Planning Mills, "manufacturers of sashes, doors, and other home furnishings." Within a decade its labour force spiralled from 20 to 150.[24] The Austrian-born Sereth brothers dwarfed this achievement. A $15,000 investment launched the Riverside Lumber Company in 1905. Seven years later, they were turning out $360,000 worth of assorted wood products.[25] Two mills had been erected in British Columbia and retail lumber yards were scattered in numerous towns. Six hundred men in all were needed to run the Calgary-based enterprise.[26]

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[21] Ritchie, "Nation Builder," p. 488.

[22] Vancouver (1907), Edmonton (1912), Prince Albert (1918), Regina (1918), Winnipeg (1926), Seattle.

[23] All figures from Sproule, "Nation Builder," p. 138; The Albertan, Feb. 25, 1937.

[24] MacRae, Alberta, Vol. 2, p. 871.

After 1900 a growing market made it profitable to manufacture a wider variety of goods. The demand for iron and steel products swelled. It was impossible for local companies to compete with Eastern farm machinery manufacturers, but success blessed those who concentrated on the production of technologically simple and inexpensive commodities. Edward Knape, for example, started the Union Works about 1909. Employing 30 to 40 men, he did custom foundry work and made horseshoes, doors, ore cars, fire escapes, well drills, tanks, and structural iron.[27] Leather-goods were produced in large plants. Riley and McCormick began making saddles and harness for the pioneer farm and soon opened a branch plant in Lethbridge. Robert J. Hutchings, an early wholesaler of leather goods, started the Great West Saddlery Company in 1899. It employed 100 men and had three branch factories by 1914.[28] E. H. Crandell started the Calgary (Western) Tent and Mattress factory. The Royal Crown Soap works was another child of local interests as where many dairies and confectionery plants.

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[25] Both figures from Ibid., p. 814.

[26] The Albertan, 100,000, p. 61.

[27] MacRae, Alberta, Vol. 2, p. 864.

[28] The Albertan, 100,000, p. 36.

The growth of wholesaling after 1900 was equally spectacular. The number of jobbers rose to 80 in 1907, then surged to 150 in four short years.[29] Many specialized in agricultural supplies; 17 sold only farm machinery.[30] While the wholesalers seldom duplicated the glittering success of the big manufacturer or real estate developer, possibly because keen competition from Eastern supply houses forced him to shave profits, a few giants emerged. James Wheeler Davidson arrived in 1905 and organized Crown Lumber. His firm opened 46 lumber yards in Alberta before 1910.[31] By 1914 William Georgeson, owner of the Tuxedo Coffee and Spice Mills, employed 100 labourers and 14 salesmen in his mammoth grocery house.[32] R. C. Thomas sold a wide range of goods. He farmed near Calgary for a decade before taking his chances in the city. After 1894 he started selling coal, ice, lumber, and farm machinery. He bought real estate and owned and managed all sorts of commercial buildings. Lloyd Mewburn in groceries, A. McKillop in boots and shoes, and Robert J. Hutching, who started General Supplies Ltd., all grew prosperous from hinterland trade.

Burgeoning wholesale expansion went hand in hand with the thrust of new railways into frontier markets. Wholesalers were delighted in

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[29] E. L. Richardson, Calgary, Alberta, Commercial Metropolis of Western Canada (Calgary: Hundred Thousand Club pamphlet, 1907), p. 14; and Board of Trade, Calgary, Alberta, The Manufacturing, Jobbing, and Commercial Centre of the Canadian West (Calgary: Jennings Publishers pamphlet, 1911), p. 18.

[30] Henderson's Calgary City Directory (1914)

[31] Calgary Daily Herald, Why Go, p. 78.

[32] The Albertan, 100,000, p. 69.

1902 when the C.P.R. made Calgary the cheapest point to ship all goods bound for southern Alberta. After 1905 railway construction in the region accelerated, and steel umbilical cords tied Calgary wholesalers to new customers. Links with two new transcontinental railways were secured when the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific entered the city in 1913. But the C.P.R. retained a mighty grip on the economy of both the city and its hinterland. In 1895 Calgary became headquarters for its irrigation projects and in 1912 Western head office for the Department of Natural Resources, a division of the company that developed Western coal, petroleum, timber, irrigation, farm land, and real estate. 1913 witnessed the construction of the huge Ogden rail shops. The C.P.R. was easily the largest employer in the city; thousands of workers were on its payroll by 1914.

The rapid settlement of southern Alberta after 1900 stimulated Calgary's transportation, wholesaling, and manufacturing functions so vigourously that the city itself grew explosively; it jumped from about 4,000 to a regional metropolis of 56,500 in a span of 15 years. The "instant city" phenomenon was only possible (but not unusual) on rapidly-settled frontiers. In Calgary it opened two new avenues to wealth: real estate and construction. Between 1900 and 1915 Calgary's property assessment vaulted from $2.2 million to $134.9 million.[33] Prices peaked in 1912 when the Hudson's Bay Company reportedly paid $750.000 for its present downtown location.[34] The entire population was crazed with speculative fever. There were 52 realtors in the city in 1907; perhaps 500 in 1912.[35]

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[33] The City of Calgary Yearbook (1919), p. 14.

[34] Calgary 100 (Calgary: Provost, 1974), p. 85. The company built its first store in 1875. It was replaced by a larger one in 1884, and by a larger one yet in 1891. This store was enlarged in 1896 and again in 1905. In 1913 the present six-storey structure opened, employing 600. The Albertan, June 21, 1913.

Real estate speculation has probably been the most effective instrument of upward social mobility in North America, especially on the frontier. An examination of 40 of the most prominent businessmen in Calgary between 1883 and 1914 reveals that nearly half of them derived a major portion of their wealth from this source, while nearly all dabbled in real estate to some extent. (See Appendix A.) James A. Lougheed came to Calgary as a young lawyer in 1883 and bought lots for $200 to $300 apiece from the C.P.R.[36] He was still able to buy 30 lots at that price as late as 1902. In the speculative madness that followed, each skyrocketed in value to $20,000, some much higher.[37] Like the best real estate gamblers, Lougheed used the profits to build business blocks on some of his properties. So did R. C. Thomas, who boasted that his income from rents in 1912 was $100,000.[38] Thomas A. Hatfield, a former Ontario cheesemaker who once invented a patent medicine called "Paulk's Great Nervous Remedy," owned 50 houses in Calgary.[39] William Roper Hull erected the six-story Grain Exchange and other large buildings in the city. After selling his meat business to Pat Burns, Hull developed properties in cities and towns throughout Alberta and British Columbia. Realtors like A. Judson Sayre specialized in farm lands.

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[35] *Calgary, Alberta; The Land of Plenty* (Board of Trade and City Council pamphlet, 1907), pp. 9-10; Tregillus-Thompson, *Directory of Great Calgary 1913*.

[36] *Calgary Herald*, Jan. 16, 1884. When the C.P.R. arrived in 1883 it built the station in the middle of Section 15 which was part of its federal land grant. Hence, for a time the company owned all the real estate in Calgary.

[37] Both figures from *The Albertan*, *100,000*, p. 144.

[38] *Calgary Herald*, June 8, 1950.

[39] MacRae, *Alberta*, Vol. 1, p. 513.

Some acquired real estate fortunes almost by accident. Thomas Beveridge owned a farm four miles east of Calgary that became valuable when the city expanded. He moved to town and became a realtor full-time. Pat Burns owned 320 acres on the edge of the city and was able to sell it for $500,000 in 1912.[40] More than one small businessman joyfully learned that his patch of land was worth more than his business.

Mushrooming growth transformed Calgary into a contractor's paradise. Between 1904 and 1912 the value of building permits soared from $.9 million to $20.4 million.[41] Builders like McDougal and Forster, and T. F. Hook, employed 200 to 400 men at the peak of the construction season.[42] While Calgary lumbermen welcomed the boom, manufacturers of more substantial building materials arose solely to exploit the new urban market. Sandstone quarries had been operating since the 1880's but large-scale organization came in 1905 when E. H. Crandell started the Calgary (Crandell) Pressed Brick and Sandstone Company. It employed 100 men and its furnaces spewed out 45,000 bricks a day.[43] W. J. Budd started cement factories through the province, and another cement manufacturer, Geoffry Silvester, formed the Calgary Silicate Pressed Brick Company in 1910.

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[40] *Calgary Herald*, Mar. 12, 1912.

[41] *Henderson's Calgary City Directory* (1914), p. 129.

[42] *Calgary, Alberta, The Manufacturing*, p. 198.

[43] Richard Cunniffee, *Calgary in Sandstone* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1969), p. 6.

The opportunities that arose in construction, real estate, wholesaling, and manufacturing were so tempting that some entrepreneurs refused to concentrate on any one activity in particular. T. J. S. Skinner worked on survey crews and carried the mail across the Rockies before settling in Calgary in 1887. He started a real estate business, then plunged into wholesaling, soap manufacturing, flour milling, and petroleum exploration. The business interests of Col. James Walker of the N.W.M.P. were even more far-flung. A Canadian-born Scotsman with some business training, he left the force in the 1880's to manage the Cochrane Ranch. Two years later he bought its sawmill and began supplying timbers for railway ties and bridges. He became a building contractor. He prospected, acquired coal mines, started ranching, speculated in city real estate. Two lots bought for $300 in 1883 were values at $50,000 during the boom.[44] He owned and operated the city's first telephone system in 1884. He started a fire insurance company, and by 1914 was deeply involved in the new petroleum industry.

R. B. Bennett also prospered mightily. He brought his talent as a corporation lawyer to Calgary in 1897 when he entered into partnership with James Lougheed. Their best customers were the Hudson's Bay Company and the C.P.R., which was soon paying $10,000 a year for Bennett's services.[45] Rather than risking his own money, Bennett organized the schemes of others. In return he retained directorships and stock in the most promising companies. This list was exceedingly long; by 1914 his interests spanned real estate, lumber mills, cattle, mining, finance, irrigation, cement, paper, electrical power, petroleum, grain elevators, and newspapers.

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[45] Ernest Watkins, R. B. Bennett: A Biography (Toronto: Kingswood House, 1963), p. 74.

The activities of Skinner, Walker, and Bennett were widely diversified from the start, but like all entrepreneurs, every prominent businessman in Calgary pumped some money into enterprises that bore little relationship to his primary business. Many of these men formed close associations. In 1899 William Carson bought Donald McLean's flour mill and re-organized it as the Calgary Milling Company. I. K. Kerr and Peter Prince were officers and major shareholders. Carson sold his interest and joined with T. J. S. Skinner to form the Western Milling Company in 1906.

Together, Prince and Kerr owned wholesale companies, a lumber mill, a power company, a ranch, and an iron works. A. E. Cross and William Roper Hull jointly owned blocks of real estate. Note the close relationship between some of the principals in important Calgary companies:

> Metals Ltd. (a mammoth eight-story wholesale house): James Lougheed, Hull, Cross;
>
> Calgary Power (not to be confused with the Prince-Kerr Company): R. B. Bennett, W. J. Budd, Cross;
>
> Rocky Mountain Cement: W. Barrington Reilly, Bennett, Budd;
>
> Calgary Colliery: R. C. Thomas, Col. James Walker, Bennett.

Pat Burns and A. E. Cross were members of the "Big Four" who together with ranchers A. J. MacLean and George Lane, put up $100,000 to finance the first Stampede. As the Great War approached, petroleum gave promise as a new source of wealth. Calgary's early businessmen shared the spoils with newcomers A. W. Dingman, W. S. Herron, Eugene Coste, and others. Founders of Calgary Petroleum Products in 1912 included Cross, Lougheed, Bennett, Kerr, and Skinner.

By 1914 a small group of men wielded enormous control over the business life of Calgary. Two factors in their rise to power should be summarized. They did not have to claw their way into established markets; a new one emerged on the frontier around them. The number of potential customers west of Ontario was 350,000 in 1891; 2.5 million in 1921.[46] Secondly, the earlier a man established his business, the less clawing he had to do.[47] But these favourable circumstances existed for thousands of prairie businessmen. Why did some rise faster, more successfully than others?

In part, it was because they were able to forge business connections that linked opportunities to capital. Sometimes they pushed each other up the ladder of success--Cross started his brewery with the financial backing of Hull and three other ranchers--more often someone dropped them a rope from above. William Mackenzie, architect of Canadian Northern Railways, was a boyhood pal of Pat Burns back in Kirkfield, Ontario. He gave Burns his first contract to supply meat to railway workers.[48] A contract to build new N.W.M.P. barracks helped launch the business career of Col. James Walker.[49] His old cronies on the force undoubtedly helped him secure this plum.

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[46] Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 2, Table 1.

[47] Of the 40 businessmen listed in Appendix A, the most successful arrived in Calgary early: 25 arrived before 1900; 14 before 1890.

[48] In 1886 for a railway in Maine. Ritchie, "Nation Builder," p. 464.

The career of R. B. Bennett neatly illustrates how a growing circle of powerful friends made many Calgarians rich. Determined to regain the family fortune swept away by the death of the Maritime ship-building industry, Bennett worked at odd jobs and taught school in order to attend Dalhousie University. While articling in a New Brunswick law office, he met a young man named Max Aitken. As Lord Beaverbrook, he would become the richest publisher in the British Empire. James Lougheed, meanwhile, was looking for a young law partner. When he asked Dean Weldon of Dalhousie for suggestions, Weldon gave him Bennett's name.[50] Following his friend to Calgary, Aitken made a quick profit in a real estate deal and left for Edmonton where he met James Dunn, another New Brunswick lawyer--this one destined to become the steel titan of Canada. Together they hurried back East and met other industrialists. This connection was vital for Aitken helped Bennett and his Calgary friends organize Calgary Power in 1909, and was able to bring Montreal millionaire Herbert Holt, Canada's richest and most powerful man by the 1920's, into the project. Considering the enormous expansion of the company, it is unlikely that Calgary money could have done the job alone.[51]

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[49] R.C.M.P. Quarterly, Vol. 4, No. 1 (July, 1936), p. 70.

[50] Watkins, Bennett, p. 30.

[51] Initial capitalization was $3 million. Memorandum of Agreement and Stock Book, Calgary Power Papers, Glenbow-Alberta Archives. In 1911 the Horseshoe Falls Plant was completed with a transmission line to Calgary. In 1912 a new reservoir was built at Lake Minnewanka with a second transmission line to Calgary. In 1914 the Kananaskis Plant went into operation. Some Facts (Calgary: Calgary Power Ltd., 1967).

By inclination, Bennett was no gambler; he preferred to invest in bank stocks, and it almost seemed as though Aitken had to drag him into profitable risk-ventures.[52] One was the formation of the Canada Cement monopoly; another involved the amalgamation of 94 grain elevators into the Alberta Pacific Grain Company (Pat Burns was invited to this party), a venture, according to Aitken, that yielded Bennett a capital gain of $1.35 million.[53] Meanwhile, a girl friend of Bennett's from back home had married Ottawa lumber baron E. B. Eddy. Through her influence, Bennett was appointed a director of the Eddy company in 1906. Eddy died, leaving his wife controlling interest. When she and her brother died in the 1920's, Bennett inherited stock valued in the millions.[54]

Illustrious connections such as these not only gave Calgary entrepreneurs direct access to capital, but convinced bankers that local enterprises were a good risk. The growth of financial institutions in Calgary was remarkable. In the three years between 1909 and 1912, bank clearings tripled from $98.8 million to $275.5 million.[55]

A close examination of the social backgrounds of forty prominent Calgary businessmen (see Appendix A) provides some general clues to their success. Contrary to current myth, they did not all come from England

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[52] See Lord Beaverbrook (Max Aitken), Friends: Sixty Years of Intimate Personal Relations with Richard Bedford Bennett (Toronto: William Heinemann, 1959).

[53] Watkins, Bennett, p. 78.

[54] Isaac F. Marcosson, "The New Voice of Empire," The Saturday Evening Post, Mar. 28, 1931, p. 55.

[55] The City of Calgary Yearbook (1919), p. 123.

and the United States. One quarter of them were born in the British Isles, and only six in England. Only five were born in the United States.[56] More than half of them were Canadian-born, a reflection not only of the numerical strength of Canadians in the city, but of their early arrival in Calgary. Most American businessmen arrived too late to reap full benefits from the great boom. The same problem faced the continental European who soon encountered other obstacles: the language barrier, a lack of capital, discrimination--perhaps a peasant background that left him ill-equipped for rapid advancement in an industrial urban society. Leopold Jacques, however, became successful precisely because he was European. The son of a French postman raised in Italy, he quickly added German and English to his native tongues of Italian and French. He worked as an interpreter at luxury hotels in New York, London, and Paris before becoming a furniture-maker in England. In 1903 he came to Calgary and started a similar business, but quickly realized that his command of foreign languages could-be turned to profit. He became a real estate broker who bought property for speculators in Europe, and in the process, acquired much land for himself.[57]

Of the forty entrepreneurs examined, nearly all were Protestants, with Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians heading the list. With the possible exception of teetotalling Methodists like Bennett and Cushing, it seems unlikely that religion played an important role in the lives of the elite, but the broad connection between Protestantism, Anglo-Saxon culture, and capitalist achievement was well exemplified in early Calgary, a relationship that has been documented for Canada generally.[58] Much less is known about the role that religion played in the success of Roman Catholic businessmen. Of the 40, only a few like Peter Prince and Pat Burns, Calgary's wealthiest resident, were Catholic. Culturally, however, it appears that an Anglo-Saxon Protestant society was more influential in shaping their business instincts. As one Chicago cattleman observed about Pat Burns: ". . . he resembles the proverbial Scotchman who keeps the Sabbath Day and everything else he can lay his hands on."[59]

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[56] In relation to their total population in the city in 1916, Englishmen and Americans were neither over-represented nor under-represented in the entrepreneurial elite.

[57] MacRae, Alberta, Vol. 2, pp. 980-1.

One scholar discovered in his study of the national industrial elite of 1885 that formal education was not a pre-requisite to business success.[60] The genteel tutoring of A. E. Cross at private schools in Montreal and England, followed by studies at Canadian universities, was not the experience of his peers. No more than one in seven prominent Calgary businessmen had attended college or business school. The majority never survived high school, but none were as poorly educated as Pat Burns. Reporters loved to record the popular rumour that he made a million dollars before he learned to read or write. At least one successful entrepreneur in seven had served an apprenticeship, an education that often promoted manufacturing success by teaching industrial skills at a tender age. Prince, like his father before him, had been trained as a millwright, a useful background for a lumber manufacturer.

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[58] See T. W. Acheson, "The Social Origins of the Canadian Industrial Elite, 1880-1885," in Canadian Business History, ed. by David S. Macmillan (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1972); and John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

[59] John Clay, "A Cattleman's Views of our Future," Farm and Ranch Review, Vol. 13, no. 8 (Sept., 1907), p. 11.

[60] Acheson, "Social Origins," p. 165.

If entrepreneurs in Calgary did not come from wealthy families, neither did many come from destitute ones. Pat Burns, always an exception, was so poor that after picking out a Manitoba homestead in 1878, he walked 160 miles back to Winnipeg because he had no money for train fare.[61] But only three prominent businessmen in the list of 40 came from homes where the breadwinner was a common labourer. The social background of well over half of them might be described as lower middle class. Their fathers were farmers, skilled craftsmen, or small businessmen; less than one in six were sons of professionals or managers, and before coming to Calgary, most entrepreneurs pursued occupations similar in status to their fathers. This information suggests the type of individual that migrated to frontiers generally. The rich and successful had no reason to go there; the very poor could not afford it.[62] There was a significant degree of social equality on the frontier and when an elite did emerge, it was nouveau riche.

A myth widely believed at the time was that businessmen owed their success to a childhood of virtuous upbringing on a farm. Only a quarter of these 40 men were raised on farms at a time when three quarters of the national population was rural. At the other extreme, only five of the 40 grew up in large metropolitan centres. The majority were raised in towns or small cities. Another valid generalization can be made. Urban folk tended to migrate to the urban frontier; rural folk to the rural frontier.[63] The frontier also tended to attract socially conservative people. When farmers or small townsmen in the East were forced to relocate, and if they were financially able to make a choice, the more flexible ones headed for the big city. Those less willing to adjust to new ways headed for the frontier and immediately looked for an environment that closely resembled the one back home. This explains in large measure why the metropolis contributed few pioneers; its middle classes could not find a familiar environment on the frontier. This conservatism of pioneers showed glaringly in the nature of frontier entrepreneurship. The nouveau riche of Calgary, and other frontier communities, usually gleaned their wealth from traditional sources, by traditional means. The same was also true of entrenched wealth in the East, but there the nouveau riche usually became wealth through innovation, by developing a new product, technological device, industrial process, or business method.

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[61] Sproule, Burns, pp. 5-6.

[62] For the U.S.A., see studies by Ray Allen Billington, in particular America's Frontier Heritage (New York: 1966). This principal even applies to central European peasants. Usually only the better off made it to the western frontiers.

From the survey of 40 men it is possible to draw a portrait of the successful Calgary entrepreneur of the 1883-1914 period. He was an Anglo-Saxon Protestant from a town or small city in Ontario or the Maritimes. His formal education ended shortly after grammar school. His father's occupation was lower middle class and so was his prior to arriving in Calgary as a young man.

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[63] For the U.S.A., again, see Billington.

This background was likely to instill a powerful hunger for material success and the entrepreneurial instincts to achieve it. Individual traits might vary widely. Pat Burns was described as a warm, jovial man.[64] Bennett was cold, self-righteous, given to temper tantrums. Everyone respected him; no one liked him.[65] (Reporter: "It is almost impossible to get any human-interest stories about you." Bennett: "There are none."[66])

But Bennett, Burns, and other successful entrepreneurs could deal intelligently--ruthlessly, if necessary--with associates, competitors, and employees to achieve their goals. Bob Edwards, editor of the Calgary Eye Opener reportedly said that Burns' idea of a good time was ". . . attending the funerals of rival butchers."[67] Evidence suggests that this rampant expansion after 1906 was triggered by fears that the Chicago "Beef Trust" was out to crush him.[68] He raced to take over small companies or to establish plants in key areas in advance of giant competitors like Swift. He was so successful that the Alberta government ordered an investigation in 1907 to determine if

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[64] Mabel Grasley, "The First Time I Saw Pat Burns," Calgary Herald, Sept. 18, 1937; and Sproule, Burns.

[65] See Tony MacUre, "R. B., Calgary's Forgotten Great," Goden West, Vol. 2 (Jan.-Feb., 1967); and Beaverbrook, Friends.

[66] Marcosson, "New Voice," p. 53.

[67] Sproule, Burns, p. 110.

[68] See in particular Calgary News Telegram, Mar. 19, 1912; and Clay, "Cattleman's Views,"

Burns operated a monopoly powerful enough to control the price of Alberta cattle.[69] Similarly, Prince and Kerr waged a short bitter war in the 1890's to crush a rival power company.[70] Cross, on the other hand, did not seem anxious to buy out the competing breweries that opened in Calgary, probably because he feared the growing prohibition movement. He invested his money elsewhere.

Few particulars are known about the treatment afforded the working man in Calgary, but clearly his life was not easy. Unskilled workers were packed into dilapidated boarding houses that lacked running water, proper heating, and privacy. True, the frontier scarcity of labour forced wages upward; in 1911 the average worker in the West received $15 to $18 a week compared to $14 a week in Ontario,[71] but employers schemed to keep wages as low as possible. When Prince and Kerr secured a power monopoly in the 1890's, electricity rates shot up but wages remained the same.[72] The cost of living was higher in the West, and the emphasis on extracting and processing natural resources often meant seasonal employment and little need for skilled workers. Laws governing working conditions were inadequately enforced. Prevailing business attitudes towards labour movements probably found their sharpest expression among nouveau riche employers. ("I built this company with years of sweat and no union is going to wreck it for me now.") Using lockouts and blacklists, Hutching's Great West Saddlery Company zealously fought efforts by employees to unionize. Pat Burns, on the other hand, was cagey; he was usually benevolent enough to avoid ugly confrontations.[73] But if the horror of labour exploitation described in Upton Sinclair's Jungle was less apparent at the Burns' packing plant, the organization of industrial processes and labour was the same.[74]

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[69] He was found not guilty, Sproule, Burns, pp. 126-9.

[70] Strom, "Eau Claire," p. 7.

[71] Census of Canada 1931, Vol. 5, Table 13.

[72] Strom, "Eau Claire," p. 7.

Another tactic of entrepreneurs was the manipulation of local government for private purposes. To gain access to the municipal till, members of the elite sometimes ran for city council. More often, small businessmen with dreams of building a Canadian Chicago and acquiring a fortune in the process, eagerly did their bidding at City Hall.[75] And entrepreneurs of every stature exerted potent influence through the Board of Trade and other business associations.

Everyone agreed that railways and farmers were crucial to economic growth. The Board of Trade was always screaming for lower freight rates and the construction of more branch lines in the hinterland. In 1898 the city handed the C.P.R. a $25,000 gift to help build its repair shops.[76] In 1884 an annual agricultural Fair was organized to squash the belief that southern Alberta was unproductive and from its formation the Board of Trade enthusiastically advertised the region. After 1904, it issued about 25,000 promotional pamphlets annually and scattered them across the continent.[77] The pamphlets portrayed southern Alberta to the intending farmer as the "Garden of Eden":

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[73] For detail on these and other employer-labour relations see Elizabeth Taraska, "Calgary Craft Union Movement, 1900-1920," (Unpublished M.A. thesis, The University of Calgary, 1975).

[74] A 1907 muckraker novel about the Chicago packing plants. For comparison with P. Burns Co. see F. S. Jacobs, "Between Producer and Consumer of Meat," Farm and Ranch Review, Vol. 10, No. 21 (Nov. 5, 1914).

[75] Only 8 of the 40 leading entrepreneurs (Appendix A) were elected to city council. See also J. M. S. Careless, "Aspects of Urban Life in the West, 1870-1914," Prairie Perspectives 2, ed. by A. W. Rasporich and H. C. Klassen (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 34.

[76] City of Calgary Yearbook (1919), p. 99.

> Climatically, Alberta is the most wonderful province or state on the continent . . . ours is doubtless the most healthful climate in Canada . . . and from an agricultural standpoint, the country surrounding our city cannot be surpassed . . . the quality of grain grown in Alberta is undoubtedly the highest, and . . . southern Alberta is one of the finest stock producing districts now available.[78]

The pamphlets questioned the fertility of soil in the Edmonton, Regina, and Saskatoon hinterlands, but promised bonanza wealth to the pioneer of southern Alberta. Other advantages included a strong moral and religious atmosphere, therapeutic drinking water, and probable long life. This prattle was heavily subsidized by the public. In 1906 the Board of Trade received $15,000 for advertising purposes.[79]

City Hall gave manufacturers advantages that were perhaps vital to the establishment of many local industries. Direct subsidies? In 1892 Donald McLean received $5,000 to help build his flour mill and another man got $800 to start a tannery.[80] Tax concessions? Cross' brewery was typical; it paid only $2.50 in 1901.[81] Land grants? In

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[77] Land of Plenty, p. 15; Canadian Annual Review (1908), p. 147.

[78] Excerpts from Land of Plenty, pp. 37 and 24; Richardson, Calgary pp. 1-2; Calgary, The City Phoneomenal (Calgary: Geddes U. Sheffield, 1912), p. 10.

[79] Canadian Annual Review (1906), p. 268.

[80] City of Calgary Yearbook (1919), pp. 99-100.

[81] Census Manuscript 1901, Brewery Papers, Glenbow-Alberta Archives.

1911 a manufacturer could buy a spacious lot from the city for only $200.[82] Two years later, City Council borrowed $250,000 to construct a massive building to house industries at public expense.[83] Merchants, realtors, and builders realized that new factories would fatten their bankrolls. They encouraged the establishment of industry through the Board of Trade, the city's Committee on Railways and New Industries which was formed to ". . . advise City Council how to secure or assist the above,"[48] and through the 100,000 Club which vowed to ". . . induce Manufacturers and capitalists to locate and thus increase the population to 100,000."[85] To advertise Calgary, manufacturing displays were added to the annual Agricultural Fair, and the city authorized special "Made in Calgary" shows. In 1906 the New Industries Committee received a city grant of $5,000 for a publicity campaign,[86] and the pamphlets issued by this and other promotional organizations exaggerated the importance of Calgary's rail connections and enticed manufacturers with cash, land, and tax incentives.

The vision of generating wealth by attracting government institutions prompted City Council to propose that the capital of the

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[82] Calgary, Alberta, The Manufacturing, p. 18.

[83] The Albertan, 100,000, p. 36.

[84] By-Laws of the City of Calgary From the Date of Incorporation in 1884 to 5th May, 1913 Inclusive (Calgary: City of Calgary, 1913), by-law no.1486.

[85] Richardson, Calgary, back cover.

[86] City of Calgary Yearbook (1919), pp. 99-100.

Territories alternate between Calgary and Regina,[87] and to seek the new provincial capital in 1905. Unfortunately for Calgary, ambitious Edmonton was well represented in both the federal and new provincial cabinets; Calgary was not, and the hated rival stole both the capital and the provincial university.

The rule of City Hall by business interests was not as despotic as it seems. Few criticized its activities. Intoxicated by the boom, nearly everyone hoped to benefit from the programs for economic growth.

Entrepreneurs with far-flung interests often lobbied at higher political levels. Some even held office: Bennett, Cross, and Cushing at the Territorial or Provincial Legislature; Bennett and Lougheed federally; Burns and Lougheed in the Senate. But excepting Bennett, who became Prime Minister, and possibly Cushing, who was Mayor of Calgary and later provincial Minister of Public Works, the interests of the elite were fixed far more firmly on business than on active political life. There was even disagreement over whether Conservatives or Liberals could best promote their interests federally.[88] Western businessmen elsewhere favoured the (slightly) lower tariff policies of the Liberals. The preponderance of Conservatives in Calgary may be attributed to the personal influence of Bennett and the local power of the C.P.R. and the ranching community.

A booming frontier economy; convenient business connections;

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[87] The Calgary Tribune, Dec. 10, 1887.

[88] Of 40 leading entrepreneurs (Appendix A) the loyalties of 19 were well known. Conservatives: 8. Liberals: 11.

aggressive ambition; hard work; the ability to trounce competitors, bully labourers, and seduce governments; and luck--these were the circumstances and qualities that propelled Calgary's entrepreneurs to sudden success. But the elite itself did not think so. It was fashionable for businessmen and professionals to pay the costs of publishing a book if the writer agreed to include biographical sketches approved by the backers. A typical example:

> Charles S. Lott is a typical representative of the spirit of the age, the spirit which leads out into new and untried fields of labor, utilizing natural resources and the advantages which the times and conditions offer in the development of large enterprises and business interests. His name is an honored one in financial circles, and the extent and importance of his operations directed by him indicate marked mental force and discernment, combined with an executive ability which recognizes in obstacles and difficulties only an impetus for renewed effort. There is in the anxious and laborious struggle for an honorable competence and a solid career of the business or professional man fighting the every day battle of life, but little to attract the idle reader in search of a sensational chapter, but for a mind thoroughly awake to the reality and meaning of human existence there are noble and immortal lessons in the life of the man who with a clear head, a strong arm and stalwart purposes makes steady advancement in the business world, winning not only success, but also the deserved respect and esteem of those with whom the years of his active life have brought him in contact.[89]

In these biographies, great riches were acquired through thrift industry, wisdom, and the moral virtues of honesty and fair play. They implied that poverty resulted from slovenly morals and laziness. But most of all, they conveyed a frantic plea for public recogniton and respect. This obsession, argued Thorstein Veblen in the Theory of the Leisure Class (1899), drove men to acquire more wealth than they needed to satisfy their material desires. Immense riches brought social status. A brief comparison of commissioned biographies in Eastern and Western Canada suggests that the desire for status may have been more powerful on the frontier. Dreams of its attainment help explain why many people headed west,[90] and why their entrepreneurial drive was so strong. Here is another illustration of the lower middle class origins of frontiersmen: what man with status in the East was likely to go pioneering? the urban frontier presented pioneers with a unique opportunity to become members of an elite. They would not have to fight their way into an established upper class; they could build their own.

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[89] MacRae, Alberta, Vol. 2, p. 623. For other examples see John Blue, Alberta Past and Present: Historical and Biographical, Vols. 1-3 (Chicago: Pioneer Historical Publishing, 1924).

But the quest for status presented a quandry. Since social backgrounds were similar, the only chief difference between pioneer classes was money. Other distinctions had to be invented. Veblen noted that the wealthy often distinguished themselves from the common herd by acquiring skills that obviously took years to develop, but which were totally useless for any economic purpose: learning dead languages, cultural history, or better yet, thousands of rules on social etiquette. These preoccupations proved that you did not have to work—that all your time was leisure time. The impression could be enhanced by wearing clothing that would render manual work impossible.

But how was the frontier elite to learn the proper behaviour of rich folks? Veblen observed that most people mimiced the class just above them. To do so, the elite in Calgary had to look eastward, and as creatures who clung conservatively to home-town traditions, they did so willingly. Eastern elites had exclusive social clubs; Calgary would have one too: the Ranchmen's Club, a copy of the St. James Club of Montreal.[91] To keep it exclusive, membership was restricted to 250, fees were $200 the first year (three months' wages for many Calgarians) and $50 a year thereafter. One blackball in seven was sufficient to deny entry to any man.[92] The club featured a library, private dining chambers, and a bar that ordered ten year old Scotch directly from Edinburgh.[93] Because the club was founded so early (1891), some prominent entrepreneurs never got the chance to join; some prominent ranchers and professionals did. Those left out quickly gravitated to the Alberta Club and the Calgary Golf and Country Club.

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[90] Note that in New France, attempts were made to keep a feudal system functioning in name even though it was a failure socially and economically. The status of seigneur was eagerly sought by pioneers.

Most businessmen belonged to an astonishing number of voluntary organizations. Between 1883 and 1914, A. E. Cross joined at least 17 and served as an officer for at least 11. W. H. Cushing and Col. James Walker served on almost every civic board in the city. Yet one questions how much leading businessmen enjoyed the work and fellowship of these organizations. Look at the favorite recreations of some of them: Bennett, reading; Cross, shooting and horseback riding; Hull, travelling and horticulture; Skinner, gardening.[94] They seemed to prefer private activities to public ones; forays into the community spotlight were probably bids for status.

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[91] The Ranchmen's Club: A Slight Historical Sketch, 1891-1952 (Calgary; Ranchmen's Club, 1953), p. 8.

[92] Officers, Members, Consitution and Rules of the Ranchmen's Club (Calgary: Ranchmen's Club, 1913), pp. 24-7.

[93] Ranchmen's Club: Slight Historical Sketch, p. 13.

The elite enjoyed socializing in less formal settings, at the clubhouse, at private parties, or at the Alberta Hotel. The largest ranchers stayed there when they came to town. R. B. Bennett took all his meals there, and held luncheons to solicit political support from businessmen. In the bar, the most stimulating entertainment in town was provided by the lively conversation of editor Bob Edwards and Calgary's famed criminal lawyer, Paddy Nolan.

The elite tried desperately to imitate the cultural life of the East. Numerous literary societies were formed, and their children were shunted off to colleges and private schools in Eastern Canada and England.[95] The affront of losing the provincial university to Edmonton, prompted Bennett, Cushing, Skinner, and other leading entrepreneurs to take a leading role in the establishment and support of Mount Royal College. A symphony was founded in 1913. Plays at the Hull Opera House, built in 1893, were staged mainly by local amateurs, but the elite strutted to its performances dressed in the formal fashions of the East. It was said that R. B. Bennett was the first Calgarian to wear a top hat;[96] all his clothes were tailor-made in the East.[97] The elite was so proud of its social pretensions and cultural creations that industrial pamphlets and directories often devoted several pages to these affairs.

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[94] C. W. Parker, Who's Who in Western Canada, Vol. 1 (Vancouver: Canadian Press Association, 1911), pp. 107, 150, 215; MacRae, Alberta, Vol. 1, p. 515; Sproule, Burns, p. 22.

[95] Henry C. Klassen, "Life in Frontier Calgary," in Western Canada Past and Present. ed. by A. W. Rasporich (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), p. 49. See Klassen for detail on cultural life in Calgary generally.

[96] MacUre, "R.B.,", p. 15.

In pursuit of status, the elite embellished their activities with conspicuous consumption. While they spent lavishly on clothing, carriages, and later automobiles, their primary indulgence was their homes. Sandstone gave Calgary the appearance of solid respectability that was lacking in most Western cities, and soon became a prestigious symbol for the very rich. The Burns' mansion, built in 1901, cost $32,000 excluding furnishings, land, and landscaping.[98] Althought his family consisted solely of his wife and one son, the mansion had ten bedrooms and four bathrooms.[99] Heavy paintings and stuffed animal heads leered down from its oak panels. The furniture was English.[100] At the height of the real estate boom, Burns valued the property at $150,000.[101] Lougheed's home nestled admist landscaped terraces and ornate fountains. Inside, there was Italian marble, Spanish mahogany, and antique furniture from England.[102] To furnish his new mansion,

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[97] Watkins, Bennett, p. 38.

[98] Elizabeth Motherwell, "Past Glories Forgotten," Calgary Herald, May 1, 1956.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Calgary Daily Herald, Mar. 11, 1937.

[101] The Albertan, May 18, 1911.

[102] Mabel E. Jordan, "City of Sandstone...," Calgary Herald, Mar. 8, 1958.

Hull spent $3,000.[103] He greeted guests in a red velvet jacket and rushed them to the third floor for a game of billiards.[104] William Pearce, a prominent government official who built one of the most elaborate mansions ever erected in this city, called his home "Bow Bend Shack,"[105] but few businessmen shared his sense of humour: Lougheed lived at "Beaulieu," Hull at "Langmore," E. H. Rouleau at "Castel-Au-Pres."

Wealth, luxury, and extravagance were paraded before admiring crowds at the mansion garden party. On one occassion Hull entertained 700 guests.[106] An orchestra played music while the guests played tennis, croquet, and lawn bowling. Lunch was served to all. Lougheed held such parties frequently; he entertained prominent visitors like the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, Princess Patricia, and the Prince of Wales (Duke of Windsor).[107]

Inspired by the automobile and enforced by zoning regulations, residential segregation by social class was coming more into vogue throughout North America. When the C.P.R. developed Mount Royal as an enclave for the rich, there was no pretending that the development was not an attempt to copy its Montreal namesake in exact detail. But residential segregation was relatively new; many millionaires continued to live along 12 and 13 Avenues South and elsewhere in the city.

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[103] MacRae, Alberta, Vol. 1, p. 582.

[104] Calgary Herald, Aug. 31, 1968.

[105] It featured 15 rooms, a billiard hall, indoor plumbing and running water, hardwood floors and panels, black walnut pillars, three fireplaces, steam heat, natural gas, irrigated gardens, servants' quarters, two-feet thick walls, brick partitions, a wine cellar, two pantries.

[106] The Albertan, May 18, 1911.

[107] Jordan, "City of Sandstone...."

In Calgary the elite did not look exclusively to the East for patterns of behaviour, but to a unique group in their own community as well. Many ranchers in the region came from prominent families in England. Their presence may be attributed to the peculiar passion of young men in nineteenth-century England, particularly sons of the landed gentry for whom the new industrial world held few opportunities, to seek adventure in some remote corner of the Empire. They might fight for the Queen in India, climb a Himalayan mountain, explore some steaming jungle. Or they might go cattle ranching in Alberta. Of the business elite, only Hull and Cross (even though he was from Montreal) seem to fit this peculiar mould.

The pretensions of the English ranchers were not without effect on the business elite. They awarded high status to the sporting horseman. Businessmen sometimes joined polo teams, the Calgary Turf Club, or the Calgary Hunt Club, whose members mimmiced the traditional English fox hunt, substituting the prairie coyote for the fox. Realtor F. C. Lowes and wholesaler Lloyd Mewburn figured prominently at all equestrian events. Burns, Cross, and Hull were ranchers from the start; entrepreneurs like Prince and Kerr probably bought ranches for reasons of status rather than economic gain. The name chosen for Calgary's exclusive club was not without significance. The status of the rancher-horseman has endured in Calgary to the present day. Many local millionaires own a ranch even though it loses money. True to Veblen's statement that the status conscious imitate the class above them, self-respecting lawyers and doctors in Calgary today must also have a "ranch," be it only 20 acres and three horses. Their daughters swell the ranks of local equestrian clubs.[108]

It is tempting to overestimate the aristocratic origins of Calgary's English ranchers. Few could legitimately claim such origins; many exaggerated their former status. As one early Westerner said to the English tourist who bemoaned the lack of historic castles on the prairie landscape, "Wait till we git to Calgary. We got lots of English ruins there only we call em remittance men." In spite of the appearance of the gentleman-rancher in early Calgary, the statement that the social origins of most frontiersmen were very ordinary remains valid.

Two influences conspired to foil the attempts of Calgary's business elite to ape the behaviour of the eastern elite successfully: the frontier and their nouveau riche status. As has been shown, these factors are almost impossible to separate. Much leisure time was essential to develop social and cultural grace; old wealth in the East had it, new wealth on the frontier did not. These men were directly engaged in building business empires--no time for much else. Cross frequently excused himself from social functions on account of business.[109] From early childhood Calgary's prominent businessmen were conditioned to hard work, and once rich, many were unable to break the habit. Pat Burns had no hobbies, took no vacations.[110] Only the largest real estate developers like Lougheed and Hull found much time for gentlemanly pursuits.

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[108] For more detail on the influence of English ranchers see L. G. Thomas, "The Rancher and the City: Calgary and the Cattlemen, 1883-1914," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. 6, Series 4 (June, 1968).

[109] Many letters, Brewery Papers, Glenbow-Alberta Archives.

Leisure time was more often the luxury of wealthy businessmen's wives. Parodying the society columns of other newspapers, Bob Edwards carried the practice of describing their clothing to an absurd conclusion:

> Among those present were: a beautiful gown of blue satin with net trimmings and touches of gold . . . and a gorgeous creation from Paris, Saskatchewan, of sequin trimmings and sage and onion stuffing.[111]

Wealthy women were free to focus all their attention on social niceties, parties, charitable organizations, music clubs, and the Calgary Women's Literary Club, formed in 1906. But even for the women and few businessmen who were able to spend all their time developing social and cultural grace, their social and educational backgrounds often doomed them from the beginning. Edwards justly lampooned their cultural pretensions: "At the Browning Club an interesting paper was read by Miss Lizzie Hargadine on the subject of grease spots and their eradication."[112]

Calgary's elite was forever revealing tattletale signs of their humble origins. What guardian of old family wealth in Montreal's

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[110] Sproule, Burns, pp. 25-6.

[111] Grant MacEwan, Eye Opener Bob (Edmonton: Institute of Applied Art, 1957), p. 142.

Westmount would keep a milk cow in the city? Pat Burns kept on Calgary.[113] Calgary's mansions were an obstentatious mishmash of freely borrowed and poorly interpreted styles from many historic period. They showed little continuity of style, little aesthetic taste. The interiors were cluttered with incongruous objects. Even the quest for status could assume different shapes on the frontier. Charity, for example, was a common way to win community esteem. But generosity towards the disadvantaged tends to inflict millionaires in old age. Before 1914 Calgary's rich were mostly young men still actively engaged in expanding their estates; the use of huge charitable donations to win status did not seem wide-spread in Calgary until the 1920's and 1930's.

The frontier city, growing wildly, booming magnificantly, feeding on a large and rapidly-settled hinterland, offered its pioneers exceptional opportunities to get ahead. Through ambition, hard work, well-honed entrepreneurial skills, and special advantages some surged well ahead of the rest. Unable to launch such large capital enterprises as transportation, finance, and heavy industry, they grew rich from a modest start in wholesaling, light manufacturing, real estate, or construction.

They came West seeking not only wealth but status. In many respects, the first goal was obtained more easily. The relative egalitarianism of the frontier combined with their own middle class origins to thwart the re-creation of an eastern elite. Because the social distinctions they raised were alien fabrications, they were paraded conspicuously in the hope of imparting a convincing reality. But if the reserved, dignified, cultured model they aimed for more often resulted in the unrefined, city-boosting, consumer-oriented figure of a George Babbitt, they nonetheless convinced themselves and their fellows that their social position was as superior as their bank accounts.

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[113] Sproule, Burns, p. 123.

CONCLUSION

While Frederick Jackson Turner sometimes misinterpreted the impact of the frontier on American society, particularly in regard to the innovative spirit of frontiersmen and the nature of frontier democracy; and while he often ignored such important aspects of frontier development as urbanization, he remains an important historian for recognizing that the frontier was nonetheless a major influence in shaping North-American society. This influence was evident in the development of Canada's Prairie West which rose from a wilderness to a modern industrial and commercial society in the brief period from 1870 to 1916. The cultural traditions of the pioneers, the physical environment, and the distant metropolis were factors that shaped the growth and nature of this society, but intermingled with them was another important influence--that of the frontier.

The age and sex imbalance of the early West was a typical manifestation of this influence. The preponderance of single young men resulted in wide-open drinking, gambling, and prostitution. In response, prairie women sought to win the vote so that these social activities could be eliminated by political means. Their desire to "civilize" frontier life was typical of the way in which pioneers often attempted to re-create the social environment of their former homelands.

This tendency was also evident in the frontier cities. The uninhabited prairie provided railway companies with an unprecedented opportunity to determine the location and importance of urban places, but it was the rapid settlement of the frontier that was responsible for the booming growth rate of prairie cities. The boom-town presented pioneers with great opportunities to acquire wealth, particularly in wholesaling, real estate, construction, and certain types of manufacturing. The magnitude of these opportunities resulted in urban competition and town promotion of an intensity that was common only to rapidly-settled frontiers. The elite that garnared great wealth from this boom was entirely nouveau riche in composition and character, a characteristic of frontier businessmen that thwarted their attempt to successfully import the social and cultural life-style of older cities in Eastern Canada.

APPENDIX A

FORTY PROMINENT ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR PRIMARY BUSINESSES, 1883-1914,

SELECTED FOR A STUDY OF SOCIAL ORIGINS

Armstrong, W. C. (real estate)
Bennett, R. B. (corporate law and organization)
Beveridge, Thomas (real estate)
Budd, W. J. (cement, finance)
Burns, Patrick (meat packing, ranching)
Cameron, Arthur L. (wholesaling, real estate)
Carson, William (flour milling)
Crandell, E. H. (canvas and brick manufacturing)
Cross, A. E. (brewing, ranching)
Cushing, W. H. (lumber milling, wood products)
Davidson, James W. (lumber wholesaling)
Denby, W. A. (canvas and mattress manufacturing)
Dowler, Leo (construction)
Georgeson, William (grocery wholesaling)
Hatfield, Thomas A. (real estate, general merchandising)
Hook, T. F. (construction)
Hull, William Roper (real estate, ranching)
Hutchings, Robert J. (leather manufacturing, general merchandising)
Irvine, John A. (real estate)
Jacques, Leopold (real estate)
Kerr, I. K. (lumber and wood products, electric power)
Knape, Edward (iron and steel foundry)
Lott, C. S. (real estate)
Lougheed, James A. (real estate, law)
Lowes, F. C. (real estate, general broker)
McCormick, Eneas (leather manufacturing)
McDougall, David (real estate)
MacKinnon, W. A. (lumber and wood products)
Mewburn, Lloyd T. (grocery wholesaling)
Prince, Peter (lumber and wood products, electric power)
Reilly, W. Barrington (cement, general wholesaling)
Sayre, A. Judson (farm real estate)
Sereth, Alexander (lumber and wood products)
Sereth, H. N. (lumber and wood products)
Silvester, Geoffry (cement and brick manufacturing)
Skinner, T. J. S. (real estate, finance, general wholesaling and manufg.)
Thomas, R. C. (real estate, general merchandising)
Toole, William (real estate)
Underwood, Thomas (real estate, construction)
Walker, Col. James (real estate, ranching, lumber, mining, petroleum)

These men were selected for the survey because of their importance, because they are representative, and because information about them is available. Lack of information prevented the inclusion of van Wart, Judge Travis, and a few other prominent businessmen.

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